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Vol. II.

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Jack Harkaway and His Son Homeward Bound.



At length Monday, looking round, and presenting his white side to his comrade, said: "What for you laugh, brudder?—yah, yah, yah!" "Him larf cos you larf, brudder—yah, yah, yah!" returned Sunday, showing his white half in return.

CHAPTER I.

SUNDAY AND MONDAY ARE OPERATED ON ARTISTICALLY IN THEIR SLEEP.

"WE'LL mix the white ground color to commence with," said young Jack.

"Ah, yes—white."

"Here goes, then!" cried Jack, as he emptied a quantity of white lead in the pot.

"Now a little oil, sir, if you please."

Mr. Mole poured in some from the tin can.

"That will do," said our hero, as he stirred it round with a brush; "now a little turps."

The turps was added.

Jack stirred away manfully.

"Now you have a turn," he said to his tutor, when his arm got tired.

"Certainly, my boy—that's only fair," said Mr. Mole readily, as he stirred away vigorously.

"Lovely smell, turps," remarked our hero presently; "don't you think so, Mr. Mole?"

"Delicious! there's something very wholesome about the odor of turpentine," gasped the tutor as he stirred the compound, "but rather pungent to the (atishoo—atishoo—atishoo! he sneezed suddenly) nostrils."

Mole's eyes were watering from the effects of the turps.

"Don't forget the dryers!" exclaimed Mr. Mole.

"I'm not forgetting," returned Jack; "I think you may add some now."

"That's capital!" exclaimed our hero, working the brush round and round. "There, the ground color's ready; now for the vermilion and the emerald green."

"Ah, yes—yes!" returned Mr. Mole, looking as eager as if the happiness of the whole human race depended on the proper preparation of the colors.

Our hero went to work again.

"Put in plenty, Jack—put in plenty," urged Mole; "don't spare the color."

"I don't intend to," grinned our hero.

"And lots of dryers—pray put in lots of dryers," Mole entreated.

"I have put in lots," said Jack, assuringly.

"Oh, how I long to begin my work on the two wretches! I shall never forget my sky blue whisker and red hair they treated me to," said Mole.

At length the paint was mixed.

By this time the glue on the fire was melted.

All was ready for the operation.

Mr. Mole hopped up to the sleepers.

The two darkies had not stirred a peg.

They sat in their chairs with their legs stretched out and their arms dangling at their sides, their heads thrown back, their eyes shut, and their mouths open—playing a powerful but not very harmonious instrumental duet on their noses.

"Now then, Jack—now then, my beloved pupil!" exclaimed Mole, in a mingled tone of affection and nervous excitement; "how shall we begin our painting lesson?"

Our hero considered a moment and then replied:

"I think we'll begin with the glue, sir."

"Ah, yes. And what's to be done with the glue?" asked Mr. Mole.

"It must be rubbed well into their hair," Jack exclaimed, as he took the bubbling pipkin from the fire and placed it on a stool.

"I see," returned his tutor. "And who is to do the rubbing in—you or I? Perhaps you had—"

"No, sir," interrupted Jack, blandly, "that's too difficult an operation for me. It requires your skill, Mr. Mole. I think you'd better rub in the glue."

"Um—ah!" returned the tutor, looking down rather doubtfully at the pot, and scratching his nose in a reflective manner; "perhaps I had."

Mr. Mole, having come to this conclusion, took off his coat and tucked up his shirt sleeves.

In the meantime, our hero had poured some of the hot glue into another pipkin to cool.

"There," he said, as he pointed to the latter, "it's in capital condition to use, sir."

"It was awfully hot a minute ago," said Mole.

"Oh," returned Jack, "it's only pleasantly warm now."

Mr. Mole, in the extent of his confidence, plunged his hands into the pleasantly warm material.

A prolonged howl was the result.

"Oh! murder—fire!" he shrieked, stumping about on his wooden leg and wringing his hands in agony. "It's boiling!"

"Suck your fingers, sir—suck your fingers!" cried Jack; "it's a certain cure."

"Suck the devil!" raved Mr. Mole angrily; "get me some cold water!"

Our hero ran for a basin of cold water, in which the preceptor immersed his hands.

The glue being now cool, he scooped up some in the palms of his hands and rubbed it thoroughly into the woolly heads of the negroes.

After this operation young Jack painted their heads with emerald green, the glue causing them to take the color readily.

"Doesn't it look capital?" said our hero admiringly, as he completed his task.

"Excellent—admirable!" grinned Mr. Mole.

"Ha, ha! black faces and emerald green hair—exquisitely ludicrous! What next?" he asked.

"Now we must paint their faces with white," said Jack.

"My dear, Jack, let that be my task," said Mole. "I will lay it on thick for them."

"Suppose you paint them half white, and leave half black; that would have a good effect," suggested our hero eagerly.

"Oh, yes, so it would," assented Mole. "I will do so. Bring the white paint, and plenty of it."

Jack brought the paint pot and Mole gave it a good stir-up.

"Now, then, fill in the right half of Monday's face with white paint," Jack continued.

Mr. Mole took a good dab of paint on his brush and "filled in" vigorously.

"There," said Mole, "I think they have it thick enough to last some time. Take that, you brute," he continued, thrusting the brush loaded with paint up one side of Monday's nose; "that will stop your snoring in such a horrid way."

"Very good!" remarked our hero in an encouraging tone. "Now, then, fill in the left half of Sunday's handsome face in the same manner."

"Ha, ha! Jack, this is splendid work!" and Mole's brush went to work again.

"Capital!" cried Jack. "And now, then, I'll rub in a little red on their cheeks, and give them an eyebrow apiece—shall I?"

"Yes, yes, do, my dear boy!" grinned the delighted tutor.

In an instant this also was done.

The work was accomplished.

Our hero was as much amused at the vagaries of his tutor as at the comic appearance of the victims.

But gradually the effects of the drug wore off.

The sleepers gave signs of reviving.

Monday woke first, and, with a sudden start, sat up in his chair.

CHAPTER II.

THE SLEEPERS AWAKENED.

THE first thing Monday did was to attempt to scratch his head.

It was but an attempt, however.

The glue had dried so hard that his head scratched him instead.

Something then seemed to tickle his nostril.

He sneezed violently, and out flew a plug of white paint with a report like a pop-gun.

This seemed to relieve the darky, who, after making a variety of extraordinary grimaces, at length succeeded in opening his eyes and sitting up.

"Golly! whar am I?"

He turned his head and caught sight of the half of his slumbering comrade's face.

"Oh, Jerusalem!" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Who the debbil dis? Dis not Sunday?"

He turned himself in his chair and contemplated the African intently.

"Him certainly like Sunday," he soliloquized; "bery like all except de top of him. Dat not a bit like. Him head green and him complexion white."

What de matter wid him? Am he ill—am he dead, or am he—"

He was about to arrive at this conclusion when young Jack pulled him by the sleeve.

"Ah, Massa Jack, am dat you?" he asked, as he turned and recognized his master's son.

"Yes, it's me," returned the youth, unable to restrain a grin at the appearance of the black.

Monday observed these signs, and gradually a smile began to glimmer on his own features.

"Anything up wid dat nigger, Massa Jack?" he asked in an undertone.

"Rather," returned our hero, confidentially.

"Hush, listen here."

Monday put down his ear.

"Mole's been having a lark with Sunday," whispered Jack.

"Hab he, though?"

"Yes; he's given him a coat."

"A coat?"

"Yes, of paint, while he was asleep. Don't say a word."

"No, sar, so help him golly he won't," chuckled Monday, immensely tickled at the idea, little suspecting he had been operated on himself.

"Oh, what a guy him look!" he continued.

"Yah—y—"

He was about to laugh, but stopped short all of a sudden and clapped his hand to his cheek.

"Golly, what dis?" he exclaimed, as, with a terrific grimace, he came in contact with the coating of paint, which was now as hard as enamel.

This unusual peculiarity caused him unbounded astonishment, and, turning round to our hero, he asked in no little perturbation:

"Anything de matter, Massa Jack, wid my face?"

"Anything the matter," returned Jack. "No. What should there be?"

"Golly, dis chile feel as though him got a big gum bile all over him cheek."

"You've been sitting in a draught and caught cold, that's what it is," said our hero. "Never mind—it's nothing. Keep quiet; see, Sunday's waking, and mind, Monday, you must keep the secret."

"All right, Massa Jack, me nebber tell him," returned the Limbian, as he threw himself back in his chair and pretended to be asleep; "him quiet as a mouse."

When Sunday came to consciousness his proceedings were very much like those of his comrade.

He opened his eyes.

There was Monday lying perfectly motionless in his chair and looking altogether so entirely unlike himself that his companion began to think something very serious was the matter.

"Gorra," he murmured to himself apprehensively, "what de matter wid him? Monday!" he called softly.

There was no answer.

"Monday, anytink de matter wid you?"

But still no answer came from Monday.

"Gorra mussy!" murmured Sunday, his fears increasing, "something drefful's come to him. Him hair have turn green—him old mug turn white. I tink him kick de bucket in him sleep and dis de fust stage ob fortification."

Sunday meant to say mortification.

Finding that no notice was taken of his appeals, he was about to start up and try to bring his friend to life by shaking him, when suddenly young Jack, who had slipped round to his side, plucked him by the sleeve.

"Hush, Sunday," he said in a low, hasty tone. "Don't say a word—it's only a bit of fun."

"What, dat dere fun?" asked Sunday, glancing at his companion's profile.

"Yes," whispered our hero. "It's only a little trick Mole's played on him."

"What, de green an' white?"

"Yes, paint. Mole's made him beautiful forever. Keep quiet; don't tell him what we have done, and see what he does when he wakes."

"What a ugly nigger him look, Massa Jack!" exclaimed Sunday.

At length Jack thought it was time to have a little more fun out of them, so he cried suddenly in a loud voice:

"Hullo, you two, Sunday and Monday—isn't it time for dinner?"

The two negroes sprang to their feet, glanced at each other slyly, and turning away, went into such a paroxysm of subdued laughter as almost to produce suffocation.

At length Monday, looking round, and presenting his white side to his comrade, said:

"What for you laugh, brudder—yah! yah! yah!"

"Him larf cos you larf, brudder—yah, yah, yah!" returned Sunday, showing his white half in return.

They were both convulsed with laughter at the sight of each other, and Sunday rushed from the room and downstairs to roar himself out in the street.

Monday, after his comrade disappeared, calmed down rather abruptly, and dropping into a chair, began to rub his plastered cheek, and to look exceedingly doleful.

"What's the matter?" asked young Jack.

"Him got drefful toothache come on all of a sudden on de top of him gum biles," replied Monday, as he rocked himself in his chair.

"You'd better tie up your face and get home to your wife, then, as soon as possible," said Mole.

In a minute Jack had got a dark colored wrapper, and tied it over the black half of Monday's face.

Jack then made his victim put on Mr. Mole's dark cloth cape, and showing him politely to the door, wished him a good appetite, and showed him out.

Monday, with his teeth aching furiously, hurried along the streets, utterly unconscious of the mirth his singular appearance created.

When his wife opened the door and he was about to step in, Ada gave a cry of surprise.

"Ada, what am de matter? Let me come in and lub you."

"No, you won't, you villain!" exclaimed Ada, flourishing a broom handle in the door defiantly, and not allowing him to pass.

"But won't you let your dear husband hab him dinner?" he asked.

"You're not my husband, sir."

The hapless Monday's eyes rolled in his head with dismay at the assertion.

"If dis chile not your husband, who am den?" he gasped.

"Not you," replied the indignant female; "my husband's a handsome colored gentleman—you're a horrid guy."

"Me, Ada—me horrid guy!" faltered Monday, feeling as though the world was coming to an end.

"Yes," Ada vociferated, "though you do try to imitate my husband's voice to get in and rob the house; but you're no more like my Monday than black's like white. You're an impostor. Go away."

"But him want him dinner," wailed the hopeless victim.

"There is none for you."

Down came the broom handle on Monday's head.

The door was slammed violently to, and he found himself outside hanging on to the knocker, the cause of all being the simple fact that his wife did not know him. But Monday did not feel disposed to be thus expelled from his own home, and hammered away with the knocker with all his might.

Soon the window opened; his wife looked out.

"There's something to drink, and I hope you'll like it," she cried passionately.

This was the contents of the water jug, and the handle breaking the jug came too, and sent the innocent applicant rolling to the bottom of his own doorstep.

"Oh, golly! him be drowned!" he groaned.

Just at this time loud shouts and laughter were heard, and Sunday, with his emerald green head and whitey black face, came bolting up to the spot, pursued by a crowd of his sable brethren.

The African had, in spirit of fun, hurried away to collect his acquaintance, to join him in ridiculing his comrade.

But the absurdity of his own appearance turned the tables upon himself, and they ridiculed him instead.

"What am de matter wid you niggers?" said Sunday, not knowing that he had been painted half white.

In vain he tried to escape. They followed him.

As a last resource he bent his steps to Monday's house, where he arrived just in time to pitch head foremost over his prostrate friend.

The yells were redoubled when, on Monday being hoisted to his feet, he was found to be in a similar state of white and green.

The darkies could hardly believe they were looking at one of their hwn race.

Instantly Monday was lugged out of Mr. Mole's

black cape, the wrapper was torn from his face, and the veritable Monday stood revealed.

At this juncture his wife, naturally curious to ascertain the effect the water jug had taken, peeped from the window.

The black half of her spouse's face was now turned toward her.

She recognized him at once.

"Monday, Monday!" she cried, excitedly, as she flew down-stairs and out at the door, amongst the crowd, to reach her husband. "Monday, my dear, what's the—"

She stopped short, and uttered a cry of dismay at the sight presented.

"Whatever has happened?" she asked.

Sunday and Monday were both too much engaged in their struggle with the crowd to answer Ada.

"Pull, baker! pull, niggers!" exclaimed the Limbian, as Sunday caught him by the arm, for Sunday had been seized by a tribe of the small black fry, who were pulling back with all their force.

"Here we is!" shouted Sunday, as with his friend he made a final rush, which carried them inside the house.

Then they shut the door to keep out the yelling crowd.

Mr. Mole late in the afternoon, sent for his cape and wrapper, and forwarded per messenger a large iron currycomb, to comb their hair with, and a couple of bottles of old Jamaica, to drink his health.

CHAPTER III.

HUNTING THE VILLAINS.

THE Bowery gang yet contrived to exist and to flourish, in spite of the utmost vigilance exercised by the authorities.

Yet a snare was being spread for them.

Untiring in the task of hunting them down were Daniel Pike and Nabley, the detectives.

Emmerson had taken the life, under the most brutal and cowardly circumstances, of Pike's most valued friend and comrade, Nabley's elder brother.

Nabley himself, as you have seen, had been nearly done to death by the same gang.

And now an accumulated store of hatred had been piled up, which must inevitably bear fruit.

The Bowery gang was doomed.

The only question was, how was that doom was to be accomplished.

Oliver Girdwood sought to exterminate them root and branch.

But to the two detectives, Nabley and Daniel Pike, this did not suffice.

They wanted to take them living.

"Death," said Nabley to Noll Girdwood—"death, my boy, is too good for these villains and murderers. Death would be rest. No, they must know what the living death of a convict's life is."

The boy shivered.

Hate as fiercely as he did the murderers of his beloved brother, he could not grapple with such revenge as this.

"These men are no cowards," said Nabley, "whatever faults they may have."

"Evidently not."

"Why, then, to shoot them down, or to let them die facing their enemy, would be elevating them to the dignity of warriors. They would be glorified and spoken of as heroes, instead of the miserable vermin that they are. Their last moments would be of triumph, and ten to one but the public would look upon them as bold and daring adventurers, while we should be stigmatised as bloodhounds."

There was certainly something in that.

"No," pursued the detective, "we must do better than that."

"What do you propose?"

"Take them alive."

"How?"

"That is to be seen."

"It is impossible, I fear," said Oliver.

"There must be no such word as impossible in this case."

Meanwhile a watch was mounted night and day upon the haunt of the Bowery gang.

When Protean Bob returned to his haunt, doubly disguised, as you will remember, he took with him a whole store of food—sufficient to victual the fortress for many days.

We use the word fortress advisedly.

It was, in fact, a stronghold.

It was well nigh impossible to storm it—to take those bold and desperate ruffians without sacrificing human life.

In that place they could defend themselves against a small army.

"I have got the way to get them out," said Oliver Girdwood, one day, to Pike.

"You have?"

"Yes."

The detective smiled.

"You are about to offer some wild and impracticable plan; but I must humor you by listening."

"What is it?" asked Nabley.

"I have found out that we can hire the basement of the adjoining house."

"For what purpose?"

"To effect a communication," replied the boy.

"Tell us more," said Daniel Pike, smiling doubtfully.

"I don't propose to make a large opening; I only suggest boring two fissures in the wall."

"How?"

"Easily enough. Use a centerbit where the wall is hard—complete it with the long gimlets such as bell-hangers use."

"And then?"

"Funk them out."

"What do you mean?"

"Blow noxious gases through the holes."

There was a bit of notion in this, and it caught his hearers' attention in spite of themselves.

Pike and Nabley consulted together.

"Explain your plan fully," said Nabley; "give us the details."

"I will—it is this. I would set to work to bore four or five holes into their cellar—at least four should be made before we begin the last part of the work."

"Next?"

"Next I would start a number of pots of something of a stifling character."

"Charcoal."

"Or sulphur."

"Sulphur for preference," said Oliver Girdwood.

"Yes, yes," said Pike, eagerly.

"Then, when all was prepared, I would set to work upon all the places at once, and having a lot prepared in advance, blow the sulphur smoke through the holes."

Nabley found one objection to it.

"They would easily stop up the holes as soon as they discovered whence the sulphur came."

"But they would not."

"It is doubtful."

"I am sure not."

"How would you propose to prevent it?"

"By working in the dead of the night—by having our instruments oiled so thoroughly that not a sound should be heard."

"In one night we could fill every crack—every square foot, of their lurking place with noxious vapours, and they would either have to die stifled in their hole like rats in a sewer, or fly into the arms of the police for bare life."

"By jingo!" ejaculated Pike, "it sounds right."

"It does," added his companion, much struck, "yet it may be opposed by the police authorities here."

"On what points?"

"It still exposes the men waiting for them to great danger."

"Scarcely that."

"They would fight like wild beast," suggested Pike.

"They would be more than half helpless," said Oliver Girdwood; "the stifling of the sulphur would act partly as a narcotic, and they would not be able to offer any thing like a resistance. Our measures could be taken in consequence."

"What further measures would you propose?"

"I would spread nets for them—snare them as wild beasts are caught—have networks or ropes to entangle them as they rush madly out of their den, and so overpower them successively as they come forth."

The two detectives were singularly struck with the boldness and originality of this scheme.

Moreover they set to work without delay to put it into execution.

The implements were brought, the place adjoining the Bowery gang's den was taken, and the lawful conspirators set to work against their lawless enemies.

One night's work was accomplished.

The utmost caution was observed in the carrying out of Oliver Girdwood's plans.

The boy inventor of the ingenious plan conducted the operations.

With him were the two English detectives, and an officer of note of the New York police, besides two workmen of great experience and skill, upon whose discretion the utmost reliance could be placed.

This completed the working staff.

The watch without comprised all our friends.

Notably amongst the watchers were young Jack and his father, Dick Harvey, Mr. Jefferson, and his little friend the dwarf.

Besides these there were several policemen.

Oliver's suggestions had been carried out.

They were provided with appliances which were certainly novel for thief taking.

Now, towards two in the morning, the door of the basement den was opened cautiously.

Young Jack pinched his father's arm to call his attention to it.

"See, dad?"

"Yes, I see."

"Hush! are they on the look-out, do you think?"

"Yes."

In fact they were.

As the door opened, three dark forms, hiding in different places, were seen to move.

One was Mr. Jefferson.

His huge form towered up in a doorway close by the gate which had just opened.

The young Kentuckian looked more like a colossal statue than a man.

A head was put out.

Two glistening eyes peered about in all directions.

Then a figure crept stealthily out.

It was nothing very formidable to look at now that it was out, this figure.

A poor old man, with white hair, and bent nearly double with age or rheumatism, or both, who could only make a very slow progress as he hobbled along on a stick.

Jefferson stepped out after him.

He trod very lightly for such a big man, and in two strides he overhauled him.

Then, clapping a heavy hand upon his shoulder, he pulled him up.

"Stop! I arrest you."

"On what charge?"

"Murder."

The old man shivered from head to foot.

"Murder?"

"Murder amongst other trifles," said Mr. Jefferson.

The old man struggled, but he was powerless in the hands of the burly Kentuckian.

"You are sure that there is no mistake, sir?" said one of the policemen, in a whisper.

"We'll risk that," said Mr. Jefferson. "Anyhow, I don't mean to let go."

"It's an awkward thing to land an innocent man."

"He's the man," said young Jack; "it is Emmerson!"

"Ha!"

The prisoner renewed his struggles for liberty.

"Emmerson! Impossible. How do you know?"

"Noll followed him dressed like that," replied young Jack, quickly.

A muttered curse escaped the prisoner.

"Besides, it is just the get-up that Saul Garcia described."

"Saul Garcia the traitor!" ejaculated the prisoner, involuntarily.

He could have bitten his tongue off the next moment, but it was too late to recall his words.

Robert Emmerson was bound and handcuffed.

He tried to cry out and warn his friends and comrades in villany, but at the first word Mr. Jefferson clapped his hand over his mouth.

It was not a gentle touch.

In fact that dab loosened his teeth, and it warned Protean Bob that he had better remain quiet, at least while he was in the clutches of Mr. Jefferson.

And so, foaming with rage, Robert Emmerson was dragged off prisonward.

They got a cab a little way on, and the prisoner was thrust in.

Beside him sat Mr. Jefferson, and opposite were two officers.

Small chance of escape for you now, Protean Bob! He felt that, too.

Yet his heart did not sink.

He sat back silent—silent and thoughtful. He was calculating the chances.

"If ever I get a chance," he muttered between his fast-set teeth, "it shall go hard with Saul Garcia. I'll have his life if I lose my own the next hour!"

CHAPTER IV.

THEIR way lay through the most unsavory and most ill-paved quarter of the town.

The streets near the waterside were all more or less irregular—dangerous for vehicles and for horses.

Jolt, jolt, jolt—bump, bump!

Suddenly there was a jerk, a crack!

The cab rocked to and fro.

Then over it went, with a mighty crash and a smash!

Next moment the occupants of the cab were scrambling about at the bottom of the cab, struggling, kicking, and crying out.

With some difficulty Mr. Jefferson contrived to get free from the scramble, and he proceeded to help his companions out of their difficulty.

The prisoner was heard to give a hollow groan.

"Are you hurt?" asked Mr. Jefferson.

"My arm is broken, I think," replied Emmerson.

They lifted him out.

One of his arms was evidently badly hurt, for he supported it with difficulty with the other.

At the same time his groans told that he was suffering most acute pain.

Now, scoundrel as he was, it touched them to see him suffering, and so thoroughly helpless.

"Remove the handcuffs," said Mr. Jefferson.

The policeman obeyed, and Emmerson gave a groan of relief.

"Which is the one that is hurt?" they asked.

"The right."

"No bones broken?"

"It is, I am sure."

He limped a bit as he answered them.

"Have you hurt your legs?" asked one of the policemen.

"One of them, returned Emmerson. "I don't think I can walk."

They stooped down to examine his hurts; and, lo! he was cured instantaneously.

Before they could say Jack Robinson, Protean Bob gave them a desperate blow, right and left, which sent them sprawling; and then, ere an eye could wink, he bounded off like a deer.

The next moment he was lost in the night.

"Blame you!" ejaculated the big Kentuckian, "for a couple of fools."

Off he ran in pursuit.

But Protean Bob was wonderfully fleet of foot, and fear lent him wings.

Moreover, the darkness favored his flight, and pursuit looked hopeless.

However, Mr. Jefferson would not give it up without a trial.

On he ran for twenty paces or more, when, being at fault, he paused to listen.

His hearing was singularly keen; long habits of forest and prairie life had sharpened it, and he heard a footstep in an adjoining street.

Turning, then, sharply round, his perseverance was rewarded by a sight of Emmerson in full flight.

"Now I have you," said the Kentuckian, dashing off.

In spite of his huge size, he was as active as the slimmest lad, and he made the running very hot indeed for the fugitive.

Step by step he cut down the distance between them. Step by step he was gaining on the prisoner.

Emmerson's liberty promised to be but short-lived.

And now not thirty feet separated them, when all of a sudden the escaped prisoner vanished.

There was a cry.

A splash.

Then all was silent.

Jefferson was running so hard that, before he could fairly realize what had taken place, he found himself upon the spot where Emmerson had disappeared.

On the water's edge!

So near, so fatally close was he, that it was little less than marvelous how he contrived to draw himself up short upon the brink.

The shock made his flesh creep—his hair stand on end.

"Phewh!" said the Kentuckian, "that was a precious narrow squeak."

He looked down.

The dark waters splashed against the woodwork below, and the wind howled dismally enough.

But there was no sign of Emmerson. Had the English murderer escaped after all? "I thought that that cuss had never been born to be drowned," he said to himself. "I'll never believe that old saying again."

He turned to retrace his steps, and before he had gone far he met the two policemen coming toward him. "Got him?" asked one.

"No."

"He has got clear off?"

"Yes."

"Hang him!"

"No fear of that," retorted the Kentuckian, grimly. "You'll never hang Robert Emmerson."

"Why not?"

"Because he's drowned."

"Drowned!"

"Yes."

They hurried back to the brink of the water and looked about, but not a vestige—not a sign—was there of the notorious criminal.

"That's the end of Protean Bob," said one of the constables. "He didn't know, I suppose, that there was no thoroughfare here; but at any rate, there would be small chance of escape. As it is, with the present high tides, the best swimmer that ever lived would be done for there."

They little knew Robert Emmerson, however, or they would have paused before coming to the conclusion that he was drowned, for in a short time a man might have been seen fighting his way from the dark waters; and, on reaching the shore, kneeling down and clenching his hands tightly, he exclaimed through his hard-set teeth:

"Saul Garcia, you have betrayed me. I swore I would have your life for it, and by Heaven I will!"

CHAPTER V.

THE gang now claims a passing mention at our hands. So well was Oliver Girdwood's plan carried out that not a sound was heard in the haunt of the Bowery gang, and yet their celler was slowly but surely filling with deathly vapors, which must put a speedy end to their villainous career.

When the first faint streaks of the morning light struggled through the grating of their celler, and played across Toro's eyes, he aroused himself with considerable difficulty.

His first sensations were of a painful burning about the eyes, a swelling of the tongue and throat.

He could hardly see.

He coughed and shook himself, and rubbed his eyes.

"Something wrong here," said the giant to himself.

Do what he would, he could not shake off the unpleasant sensations.

By degrees it began to alarm him, and then he awakened Hunston.

The latter now experienced just the same sensation as Toro had on awakening.

Smarting of the eyes, swelling of the tongue and throat, and difficulty of articulating.

What could it be?

It fairly puzzled them.

"There is only one way of accounting for it," said Hunston.

"What is that?"

"We have been stived up here so long that the air has got foul."

"I suppose it is that," said Toro. "But the remedy?"

"That is more difficult to discover than the cause."

"Something must be done," said the giant.

"Of course."

"And speedily."

"Just my opinion. But what?"

Toro scratched his shaggy locks for an idea.

"We had better wake them all up and consult with them about it."

"Very well."

They set to work to arouse their sleeping comrades, and as they woke up one by one, it was remarked that they all appeared to suffer in some degree from the same symptoms as Hunston and Toro.

Some more, some less.

It was observed, too, that one man, who slept with a handkerchief over his face, had been scarcely inconvenienced by it.

The reason of it was apparent enough.

The sleeper breathed through his handkerchief, which acted as a species of respirator for him.

Now this man was naturally in a better position than his comrades to judge of the nature of the complaint which troubled them all.

"I can smell sulphur very strong," he said, with a sniff.

"Sulphur!" ejaculated the gang, in a breath.

"Yes."

"Impossible."

"Or charcoal."

"But how? Where can it come from?" said Toro.

"That I can't say; but still I have a notion."

"What is it?"

"What if they were trying to funk us out?"

"Funk us out?"

"Yes."

"What do you mean?"

"How?"

"Smoke us out, I mean."

It was a pretty shrewd guess, and it was so very likely that it made Hunston look thoughtful.

"It would almost seem like it," he said, "yet I don't see where it could come from."

"Nor I."

"The door."

"No—the grating."

"Impossible!"

"Why?"

"The grating is always clear enough."

Now, while this discussion was going forward, the sun

came out and shot a powerful ray into the cellar, along which they could see the noxious vapors playing, curling and dancing in their struggles to get to the air.

One of the gang was a mysterious German in spectacles.

He pointed to the fumes wriggling their tortuous course along the sunbeam.

"Zee dere," he cried.

"I do."

"Ve shall be chokit!" said the German, in the most cheerful manner, as though he were announcing a bit of the best luck imaginable.

"Choked!"

"Ja wohl," he said, nodding.

"But how do you propose getting over the trouble?"

The German thought for awhile, and then replied:

"Make a hole, und greeb out."

"Where?" asked Hunston, eagerly; "in the wall?"

"Nein."

"In the floor?"

"Nein."

"Where then?"

"In der zeiling."

"Why there?"

"Because dey haf examine der haus, und dey haf discover dat dere is no door—no gommunication, and dey not on der watch dere."

"You're right, Fritz, you're right," ejaculated Hunston. "Fritz is the man to save us."

The work had to be proceeded with briskly.

And this is the way they set about it.

Herr Fritz Von Koppenhaagen was hoisted on Toro's shoulders, where, armed with different pointed instruments, he proceeded to loosen the plaster and masonry.

In this way they escaped their present dilemma—but only just in time.

The great difficulty was that the nearer the roof, the denser the fumes of sulphur, and Von Koppenhaagen had some trouble to keep at his work.

However, he was relieved presently, and the work was accomplished in this way—that is by turn and turn about.

"I am so glad that I can tell," said Fritz, "to zee der hole is droo. Und now I will go droo der hole. Dat ist zer goot; it make me larfs."

The French have a saying about beleaguered towns which proved to be very true during the war:

"Ville assiegee—ville prise," "A town besieged is a taken town."

The inventors of that proverb were shrewd observers.

It is invariably the case.

Nor was this any exception to the rule, only, thanks to the sagacity of Herr Fritz Von Koppenhaagen, the besieged managed to sneak off and leave their fortress in the hands of the enemy.

And so it came to pass that, when three days were gone by, the besiegers resolved to effect a breach and push into the fortress.

The garrison, they concluded, would be very harmless now, thanks to Oliver Girdwood's fumigators.

The utter silence of the place convinced them that the sulphur fumes had reduced the gang to an utter state of helplessness, and that they would be discovered as dry as a fly in a spider's web.

Great was their humiliation, therefore, when they came down the cellar with endless precautions to guard against surprise, and found that the birds had flown.

They examined the house above, but found it was utterly deserted now.

Upon making inquiries, they learnt from the police authorities that the owner of the house was a suspicious customer, whose movements had long brought him under the eye of the excise people.

He was reported to have made money during the war in blockade running, and now that that was over, he appeared to turn his hand to anything which might be termed a kindred trade.

Some people said he smuggled.

Others said, with more apparent reason, that he earned a risky livelihood by serving the rebel Cubans.

This was exceedingly risky, as many poor fellows have since found out.

This rumor caught the attention of Daniel Pike, and he pushed his inquiries further in that direction.

And, after some days, they discovered that Captain Clemmings had just embarked, having got his crew completed.

The Spanish consul had ascertained beyond doubt that the "Will-o-the-Wisp" was engaged in a desperate venture—the transport of arms to the Cuban insurgents—and he set to work to take the necessary steps to prevent the vessel from starting.

The Harkaways were very much interested in this, for Pike and Nabley had been actively engaged in raking up evidence themselves, and with this notable result.

They had, beyond all manner of doubt, traced some members of the Bowery gang on board the "Will-o-the-Wisp."

This settled, they had to obtain a search warrant.

Every possible facility was granted them in this matter.

But certain formalities had to be gone through.

In the meantime certain events had occurred which must come in their proper order.

These must be given in another chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

THEY could not get over Mr. Mole's betrothal.

The Harkaways made sure that it had been brought about by young Jack.

Little Emily, Harvey and Hilda's daughter, had now quite recovered from her long illness, and once more became the playmate of young Jack.

She was indeed a most beautiful girl, and our young friend Jack seemed at all times pleased to be in her charming company.

Little Emily believed that young Jack was the cause of Chloe selecting Mr. Mole for her husband.

But young Jack protested stoutly that he knew nothing about it.

Nor, in point of fact, did he.

"After all, Em," said he slyly, "what's the odds? Black or white have hearts alike."

"Of course they have."

"And Chloe is a very good and kind girl."

"That she is," replied little Emily, with warmth.

"And if she loves Mr. Mole, I am very glad that she is going to have him. And I'm glad for him, too. I don't like to see people sighing and dying for each other, and not able to marry because one happens to be a dip or two darker than the other."

The sentiment caught little Emily on her soft side.

"But do you think you would like a black wife, Jack dear?" she asked, archly.

"Not I," replied her youthful champion; "but I'd marry her if I were a man, and she loved me."

"Would you, indeed, sir?" said Emily, with a toss of her flaxen curls.

"Of course."

"Then you had better go and look for your black sweetheart," said she, flouncing out of the room.

But young Jack caught her before she could get fairly away, and gave her a kiss that you might have heard in the next room.

"Well, I'm sure," said the little lady, reddening, "you're very impudent, Master Jack."

"You don't think so," said young Jack, saucily.

"Indeed I do."

"Then give it me back."

And then there ensued a chase, and young Jack let himself be caught after a very little dodging, and held up his cheek to be punished.

She lifted her little hand, but dropped it again as he stood his ground firmly, and did not flinch.

"What!" exclaimed young Jack, "you won't, Em?"

"Not this time."

"Then give me back mine."

"Your what?" asked the young lady, demurely.

She learned the art of coquetry at a very early age, you see.

"My smack," explained young Jack, grinning.

"Don't be silly, sir," replied Emily, who could not pretend to misunderstand any longer.

"Very well," said young Jack, "I know why you won't."

"Why?"

"Oh! you know."

"I'm sure I do not."

"Noll Girdwood wouldn't have to ask you twice."

Emily colored up at this insinuation.

"There, there, cried the mischievous boy, "you're blushing—that tells."

"I'm sure I'm not," retorted little Emily.

But as she spoke, the color on her fair cheeks deepened to a rich purple.

"I knew you cared a deal more for Noll than you do for me," said young Jack, in that tone of voice which is called "half joke, whole earnest." Well, I don't mind if you really like poor Noll best; but don't you flirt with him, and then give him turnips."

"That's very vulgar," retorted the little beauty, "and it isn't true."

"Oh, isn't it?"

"No."

"Why, you used to be ever so fond of me."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, you're not now."

"Who says so?"

"I do."

"You're a wicked, ungrateful boy."

"I don't believe you would have cared much if Hunston and Toro had done for me. I don't believe you'd have shed a tear after me."

"Oh, Jack!"

This was too much for her, and she burst into tears.

Then young Jack was melted too, and he hastened to dry her eyes with his pocket-handkerchief, and what remained of them he kissed away as tenderly as you please.

But she sobbed away in great distress.

"You say I don't care for you," she said; "but you don't care for me, of course."

"Indeed I do."

"You don't."

He protested stoutly, but she would not allow it.

"You wouldn't try to distress your friends so, if you did really care for them," she said.

"I was not to know that they cared enough for me," urged young Jack.

"But some of them must care for you, and if you cared for them you would never go running into all kinds of danger for no purpose but to make us all unhappy."

"Oh, indeed!"

"No, sir," she added, with flashing eyes, and changing her tone, "but I don't admire it, I don't think it brave after all. You have no need to run after danger in that way, just to show that you are courageous."

"Is that what I do?" said young Jack, humbly; "well, I won't do it any more."

"You promise?"

"I do."

"There's a dear, good Jack," she said, clapping her hands with glee. "But you'll forget unless I give you something to remind you."

"No, I won't."

"Oh, you will. Now what shall I give you. Let me see."

"One of your curls."

"Oh, no; you'd throw that away soon, I know. Here's a box of chocolates I have just bought. Now, whenever you feel inclined to do anything too harumscarum, look at this, and remember your promise."

"I will."

And then he sought for a gift for her.

He had nothing at that moment but his little necktie; this he took off his neck and gave her, and she kept it for many a long year as a love gift.

Her gift to Jack was, however, destined to prove a very valuable one indeed to him. And that ere long.

CHAPTER VII.

Mr. Mole's wedding was the one topic of conversation among our friends, the Harkaways and party.

As soon as it was settled, Dick Harvey was full of his mischief.

Nothing would do, but he must organize visits of congratulation on rather an elaborate scale.

These visits were to be carried out with a deal of ceremony.

Harvey himself led the way in these congratulatory visits.

Young Jack was with him on that auspicious occasion. You can guess how they enjoyed themselves.

"Mr. Mole," said Harvey, with the greatest gravity, "accept my warmest congratulations."

Mr. Mole winced.

"Yes, thank you, Harvey," he said, "I am much better."

"Of course you are."

"No pain now."

"Pain!" exclaimed Harvey, with an extravagant sigh and a leer of great significance, "young fellows in your condition are insensible to pain."

"In my condition?" said Mole, glancing at his wooden leg.

"Yes."

"What condition?"

"Betrothed."

"Ugh!"

"Under sentence of matrimony," sighed Harvey. "Ah, sir, you're a lucky dog."

"Harvey," said Mr. Mole, "I can't stand it. I'm not used to it—that is, not used to it of late."

"Of course not," replied the irrepressible Dick; "but as it makes your third wife—"

Mole groaned.

"Your third black wife, I may say—"

"Harvey."

"Sir."

"Unless you wish to turn my stomach, you will make no allusion whatever to the past."

"If you wish it, sir."

"I do."

"Very good, then."

"The present is quite painful enough."

"The present!" said Harvey, with a stupid, solid look.

"Who has made you a present?"

"Tut, tut, tut!" quoth Mr. Mole, impatiently. "You're a sad tease, Harvey. I mean the present time."

Harvey pretended to look serious.

"I hope that your approaching nuptials do not cause you any anxiety."

Mr. Mole groaned.

"Of course a man in your position feels anxious," pursued Dick Harvey, pitilessly, "but it exalts you in our estimation, Mr. Mole."

Here were crumbs of comfort for the tutor.

He grabbed at them eagerly enough, too.

"How?"

"We recognize in it your strength of mind, Mr. Mole. We see how superior you are to vulgar prejudice. You have no weak-minded prejudice in favor of fair faces."

"Oh!"

"Or flaxen hair."

"Oh, Harvey, but I have!"

"Or blue eyes."

"Don't, Harvey, don't!" groaned the unhappy tutor.

"You care little about the skin of your innamorata being a dip more or less inky."

"Harvey!" almost shrieked the tutor, "stop!"

"Ah," said Dick, looking up at the ceiling in rapt admiration of Mr. Mole, "that's where we recognize the strong-minded, large-hearted Isaac Mole."

"Yes, Mr. Mole, when we consider that you are about taking to your heart and home your third wife, and she, like your two first, beautiful and black, we must, in justice to you, my dear sir, say you are a man of undoubted courage."

And, apparently too much overcome for more words, he wrung Mr. Mole earnestly by the hand.

Mr. Mole could scarcely reply, but he made a very wry face.

"I hope the future Mrs. Mole is quite well, sir," said young Jack.

"Who?"

"The future Mrs. Mole."

"It is scarcely customary to speak in those terms, Jack," said Harvey.

"Oh, I'm very sorry," said young Jack, looking confused, in order to cover his laughter; "I thought I was in order."

"You mean the bride."

"The fair bride?"

Mr. Mole could not repress a groan.

"She's quite well, but I hope, Harvey, that you have not brought Jack here for the purpose of making any unseemly fun of his tutor."

"Dear me, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, with a grieved expression, "I am exceedingly sorry to find that you should attribute such motives to me."

He touched his eyes with his handkerchief.

Mr. Mole was melted.

"Come, come, Harvey," he said, "I don't mean anything, only you were always such a devil in your fun."

"All right, sir," said Harvey, winking at young Jack behind his handkerchief.

"But don't congratulate me any more about the future Mrs.—faugh!"

"What is the lady's present name, then," asked Harvey.

"Chloe."

"Yes, I know."

"What then?"

"Why, I could never presume to speak of her as Chloe."

"Why not?"

"What?" said young Jack, looking shocked. "The future Mrs. Mole—"

"I don't know her other name."

"What an odd thing."

There was a knock at the door, and Sunday entered.

"Morning, Mas. Mole," said the darkey, with his accustomed cheery grin.

"Good morning, Sunday."

"Hope you bery well dis morning, Brudder Mole."

"What?"

"Hope you bery well."

"But did I understand you to call me brother?"

"Yes, Brudder Mole, I call you brudder."

"Then, you black doll, don't learn to take liberties."

"Liberties!"

He burst into a boisterous fit of laughter at this.

The word tickled Sunday mightily.

"D'yar tink I want to kiss yar, Massa brudder?"

Jack and Harvey could not refrain from joining in the merriment at this, whereupon Mr. Mole grew violent in his language.

"Why, you impudent sweep!" he cried, "you block of coal! you black idoll! you—you—"

"Go on, Brudder Mole," said Sunday laughing. "Do you know, Massa Jack, I never look at Brudder Mole without thinking of that pussen who was took poorly at the funeral of his fifth wife."

Young Jack tipped the wink to Harvey.

"What was that?"

"Why, he was a gwine to faint off, when someone says—"

"Let him alone; he will soon re-wive." Yah, yah, yah!"

Mole was furious.

"Stop your hideous joking here, Sunday," he cried, "or else leave the room."

"I 'peal to dese gemmen," said Sunday, with a merry twinkle in his eye; "am I not a man and a brudder?"

"Of course."

"Certainly," said young Jack. "Of course you are."

"And Mr. Mole," said Harvey, "will be the first to admit it."

"In a poetical sense," said Mr. Mole

"Precisely."

"And shan't I be more his brudder than ever?"

"Why?"

"Cos he's gwine to spouse a lady on color."

Young Jack and Harvey assented at once.

"No doubt of it."

"I wish you would keep your remarks to yourself, you animated black pudding."

Sunday replied—

"All right, Brudder Mole."

And then busied himself about the room.

He appeared greatly absorbed in dusting about, and as he went on he sang to himself sotto voce.

It was a medly song, and he had a good idea of tunes, so that it did not jar upon the ear at all.

But when he got to a very old English ditty, called "Let us haste to the wedding," Mr. Mole's feelings got the better of him, and he began to use bad language to Sunday.

"Don't like music, Brudder Mole?"

"Not that tune."

"Bery good."

He changed it, rattled off a variety, and concluded his selection with a bar or two of "Old King Cole."

This was full of more painful reminiscences than the other, so he stopped it quickly.

"If you must sing, you black tulip," cried the irate Mole, "let it be something less jiggy and singeongy; I hate such muck."

"Summat stately, sorter, Brudder Mole?"

"Yes, hang you."

Sunday changed his time, tune, and manner at once, and strutted up and down in his dusting, to the imposing strains of Mendelssohn's "Wedding March."

This was too much for Mr. Mole.

With a violent expletive, he threw the first thing to hand at Sunday, who caught it dexterously and tossed it back a la cricketer, crying—"Play!"

Mr. Mole found it anything but play, for the book he threw at Sunday, being rather heavy, and on its return passage catching Mr. Mole on the side of the head, made him feel at that moment as though he should like to exterminate every nigger in the world.

"Well, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, as he left the apartment, "I trust, when I see you again, you will inform me when the happy day will be fixed for your marriage."

CHAPTER VIII.

SAUL GARCIA slept badly on the night that Emmerson leaped into the river and escaped from the American and English detectives.

He was full of nervous fancies, and when he dozed off, it was to dream horribly.

He got up twice and went downstairs to look at the fastenings of the house.

Then he went up again to his room, and endeavored to compose himself for sleep.

He tossed about upon his pillow; he groaned and moaned, and woke up with a start of terror.

"How awful!" he murmured to himself; "how awful!"

He was not altogether a superstitious man, but yet his dreams had impressed him to an alarming extent.

Thrice had he dreamed the same thing.

Thrice had an awful dream-drama been enacted before him—a drama in which there were only two actors.

One was himself.

The other was his sometime patron, Robert Emmerson.

He had gone to bed full of thoughts of Protean Bob and of his threats.

The recollection of having taken blood money from the detectives was ever before him, and although he did not repent him of it any more than he did of his many means of adding to his ill-gotten gains, he lived in continual terror lest Emmerson should foil his pursuers, and by some means hear of his (Garcia's) treachery.

Three times, as the old Jew slept that night, Emmerson the murderer rose up before him.

And each time, to the Jew's fancy, so plain, so vivid, so lifelike.

He had a peculiar look about him that the Jew could not understand.

His head and clothes were drenched and dripping with water, like one who has narrowly escaped from a watery grave.

His face was white and pallid, his lips blue, and his eyes flashed with fierce menace.

And this horrible figure in each successive vision, glided on to the Jew, who seemed to know intuitively that his own doom was sealed.

And yet he could not move.

Could not lift hand or foot to help himself.

He tried to shake of the horrible nightmare and cry for help.

But in vain.

Again and again the dreadful vision returned to the Jew.

At length, when he had seen to the downstairs fastenings for a second time, he grew quieter and calmer, and he returned to his bed to rest.

"My supper has disagreed with me," he said to himself, "or why should the shadowy form of Emmerson haunt me so to-night?"

And mumbling to himself, he turned on his side and slept again.

All is quiet.

Yet hark!

There was a faint, creaking noise on the stairs.

The door was softly tried.

At first it resisted.

But a patient hand was there to force it, and with a warning creak it opened slowly.

And then there appeared a strange, dark figure in the doorway.

A man of ghastly mien, with pallid cheeks and damp, matted hair; with clothes which clung to his form as though they had been saturated with water.

The figure paused.

Then the eyes rested upon the sleeping form of the old Jew, and the dark figure smiled in a peculiar way.

"He's mine," said this spectral-looking visitor—"yes, mine."

The Jew slightly moved, mumbled something indistinctly in his sleep, and then he repeated the groans and the stifled cries which he had gone through before in each successive phase of this hideous nightmare.

"Mercy, mercy!"

"He must be thinking of me," said the figure, crouching by the Jew's bedside. "He'll think more of me before I've done with him, the treacherous hound."

He took off his coat.

Then he turned up his wristbands with great deliberation, and advanced to the side of the bed.

The Jew slept like a cat.

The faint creaking of the visitor's boots aroused him, and he opened his eyes.

His glance fell on the visitor at once.

The effect was electrical.

The Jew's eyes dilated, and his jaw dropped with terror indescribable.

Death seemed before him.

His fate was there.

Yes, the chief actor in that horrible dream-drama which had so disturbed his rest—the hideous nightmare which was so fearfully realistic, was near him.

Here he was in the flesh.

"Emmerson!"

The sound came softly from the parched lips of the Jew.

The visitor nodded.

"What do you want here, Emmerson?" faintly came again from the old man.

Emmerson stood looking sternly, but spoke not.

"So late," faltered Garcia; "so very late."

Emmerson seemed to glide toward him.

"You know what I've come for, Saul," he said presently.

"No, indeed, my dear Emmerson."

"Oh, yes, you do: I made you a promise once; I've come to redeem it."

"Ugh!"

An involuntary shudder escaped the Jew.

"I told you, Saul Garcia," said Emmerson, with fatal deliberation, "I warned you that if you played fast and loose with me, you—"

"Never!"

"You have."

"Never, I swear!"

"You have! I have proof positive of your treachery. So, Saul Garcia, I have come to fulfill my part of the contract."

"What do you mean?"

"Murder."

"Oh, no, no, no!" gasped the Jew.

"I do; I am here for that purpose."

"You are mistaken, Emmerson; you are, I swear, Heaven is my witness!"

"Don't forswear yourself at such a time," said Emmerson.

"I don't, I don't!" said the Jew, eagerly. "Let that be the proof; I would not forswear myself if there was any danger."

"You are getting prudent, Saul," said Emmerson, with a laugh. "But you have betrayed me, you miserable old fool, and now your end is near."

"No, no," cried the Jew, "my end cannot—shall not be near."

"It is."

"Mercy!"

"I want to feel your throat in my fingers—to feel the life slowly going out of you as my grip tightens."

"Ha!" cried the Jew, starting up in his bed.

"What now?" He glanced around him, fearing interruption.

"I know it is a dream," said Garcia; "I know now. The same words as I heard before in my dream. Oh, shall I never wake—can I never shake of this horrible nightmare?"

Emmerson laughed sardonically at this.

"I'll shake off the nightmare for you," he said; "I'll send you out of the land of dreams altogether."

And he rolled up his shirt sleeves above his elbows.

"Help!" cried Garcia, wildly, as he sat up; "help, murder! Oh, Emmerson, do not kill me; spare me, spare me, good Emmerson."

He made two strides forward and seized the Jew by the throat.

He fought and struggled, but oh, so feebly!

He was an old man, and at best he could have made but a very poor resistance to the enemy.

As it was, the fear deprived him of such little strength as he possessed.

The dreams of that dread night had paralyzed him for the time being.

It was a poor look-out for him if he had to count upon his own efforts now for his salvation.

Unfortunately for himself he had.

But it was not to be very soon over.

Emmerson was a master in refined torture; a staunch hater, too, and he had resolved to feast himself to satiety with vengeance.

So he dallied with his victim.

And he watched with keen enjoyment the wretched old man's deadly fear, and every phase in this black deed was invested with a triple charm to the ruffian.

"Now, Saul Garcia," said he, "you have sold me to the detectives, have you? Now, my friend, you have not ten minutes to live."

The horrible deliberation with which he spoke these words produced the full effect that was expected.

The old Jew seemed to gain strength suddenly, however, and then there occurred a desperate fight between them.

With a jerk and an effort which for him appeared something more than human, he freed himself from his enemy's grip.

Then he bounded off to the other side of the bed.

Emmerson crawled after him, seized him by his scant gray hair, and tugged a handful out.

With a muttered imprecation, the assassin grabbed again at his victim, and once more securing a hold upon his scraggy throat, he dragged himself over the bed to him.

Saul Garcia fought madly with his open hands in self-defense, and his assailant's skin suffered in consequence.

His long, snake-like fingers were tipped with nails, that cut into the assassin's flesh, and scored long channels of scratches, which were of too serious a nature to be easily effaced.

They remained there as evidences of his crime for many a long day.

And the smarting of these wounds frustrated in some measure the murderer's purpose, for it goaded him to greater fury, and he fought the wretched old man with all his brutal strength.

The old Jew battled as only one can that fights for dear life.

The assassin's face was red with blood.

The victim's was white with the pangs of death.

But the livid look of his face did not stay Emmerson's hand.

He relaxed his hold for a moment, it is true, but not because his pity was excited for his victim.

No, far from that.

His own words told his feelings upon the matter more eloquently than words of ours can describe them.

"I'm over hasty with him," he said to himself, "like the fool that I am. He mustn't go off as easily as that. Saul!"

No answer.

The wretched old man was apparently past speech.

"Saul, Saul!"

He shook him, but not a sound escaped his victim.

His work was done but too effectually.

"Hasty fool that I am," muttered he. "I have fooled myself; but now I must look after his dollars, and make sure of all that I can."

He rummaged about the room for the miser's hoard.

From time to time he glanced up at the bed to see how the victim fared.

But Saul Garcia never moved hand nor foot, never quivered lip or eyelid.

His search was in some measure productive; but it did not come up to his expectations, for he guessed shrewdly that the murdered man was rich, and he hoped to light upon the hoard.

But this was no easy task.

Every now and again he paused in his search to glance at the bed, but all was still there.

"I was a fool to be so hasty," he said to himself; "I ought to have frightened him into telling me where it was hidden. It would have been rare sport to make him know that I was about to inherit all his hard earnings before I had killed him."

He paused.

"What was that?"

A serious expression of alarm shot across his countenance.

"It sounded like something moving downstairs."

He was right.

There certainly was a noise below, just as though the street door was being tried.

He listened at the door for a moment to assure himself that his suspicions were well founded.

"I was right; someone is at the street door," he murmured, looking very stolid.

He did not get flustered at all, but put on his coat with great deliberation, and, with a glance about the room, he stepped downstairs.

Gaining the passage with a hasty, yet not hurried step, he was not a little startled to hear a key in the street door lock.

But even now his consummate self-possession did not desert him.

He paused a moment to consider what he should do—a moment—no longer.

Indeed, had he taken more, he would scarcely have had time to get safe, for he had barely got up to the door when it yielded to the pressure from without.

Emmerson stepped up behind the door as it opened, and then he stood motionless as a statue.

Two men passed hurriedly in.

"I'll stay here," said a voice that sounded familiar to Emmerson.

"It is scarcely necessary," returned another voice, which he knew as well; "there is small chance of his being here."

"Indeed, I look upon it as a certainty."

Emmerson felt a little bit anxious now, as you may suppose.

"I'll wait here," said the positive speaker, who was no other than the sturdy Kentuckian, Mr. Jefferson.

Emmerson shrank as it were into a nutshell.

The door opened wide and hid him fairly from view, and the two passed upstairs.

Emmerson paused awhile to consider.

His decision, however, was quickly made.

He turned up the collar of his coat, stepped half way up the passage, and then said, in tones sufficiently loud to be heard outside—

"All right, I'll tell Mr. Jefferson."

Then he stepped out.

"I'm off for more police," he said hurriedly. "They want you up stairs. There is something amiss there."

It was the work of a second.

Before Jefferson had time to think even, the murderer passed by and disappeared in the night.

CHAPTER IX.

"Who could that be?"

He little thought that the fitting figure was the object of their search.

He was taken thoroughly by surprise, and Emmerson was gone before he made the reflection to himself just recorded.

Then, in obedience to the wish supposed to come from there the Kentuckian stepped up stairs.

He gained the top just in time to follow his two comrades into the old Jew's room.

"Here I am," said Jefferson. "What do you want?"

"You here, sir?" said one of the officers in surprise.

"Of course."

"But you said—"

"That I would stay on guard down stairs. Yes, I know."

"What have you come up, then, for, sir."

An exclamation of impatience escaped Mr. Jefferson.

"Didn't you send for me?"

"No."

"No?"

"How could we? Here we are, both of us."

"But that man you sent down to me?"

"Man—sent!" iterated the puzzled officers.

"By Heaven!" thundered the Kentuckian, "you will drive me mad. Did you, or did you not, send a man down stairs to me, to ask me to come up?"

"No."

"You did not? Then who could he have been?"

"Who?—perhaps the man we have come to trap—Bob Emmerson himself?"

"Confound him!" cried Mr. Jefferson. "Then he has fooled me by his readiness after all."

He stepped back toward the stairs with the intention of following him.

"You may as well give it up as a bad job to-night," said one of the officers. "Emerson will never be trapped to-night. He runs like a deer, and half as much start as that would serve to get him clear off."

Just then a low, hollow groan reached them.

They started.

"What was that?"

The sound was repeated.

Now it was distinctly from the bed, and Mr. Jefferson drew back the sheet which the assassin, in his flight, had thrown hastily over his victim.

He had left Saul Garcia for dead, surely enough.

But the wretched old man was hard to kill.

Dead to all appearance he had been for some time, but the cruel usage he had received had produced exhaustion, and a species of trance only.

Still it was not possible that that withered old frame could survive such a shock.

The marks of violence were too apparent to render any explanation necessary.

He opened his eyes and stared at them.

Twice or thrice he essayed to speak, but he was some considerable time in getting his breath again.

"Have you got him?" at last he asked, eagerly.

"Who?"

"The murderer."

"Who is that?"

"Emmerson."

"No."

"Ugh!" growled the old man, "you were too late. He will dodge you all yet and escape."

"No, he won't," said the Kentuckian, bluntly; "not if I have to spend my life in catching him and bringing him to justice."

The old man's eyes glistened at this.

"Do you say so?" he exclaimed; "that's brave."

He fought again for breath for some moments, and then he beckoned them all to draw nearer to him about the bed.

"On that shelf," he said, "you'll find some whisky in a bottle; give me some; it will give me strength to last out what I have to say, and then I can die in peace."

They obeyed.

And as the spirit trickled down his poor, maimed old throat, he appeared to revive somewhat.

The deadly pallor faded momentarily from his cheeks, and his eyes brightened.

"Now hearken all," he said. "I have no time to make a will, but I leave all my property to you."

He pointed his finger at Mr. Jefferson as he said this.

"All to you."

"To me?"

"Yes."

"Why, what for?"

"In trust."

"For whom?"

"Myself."

They exchanged looks at this.

His mind must be wandering, they all thought.

But they were wrong.

"You will spend it to the last cent in hunting this Emmerson—this murderer down. I am rich," he added, "rich! richer than they dream of. Spend it all, spend it like water; there's plenty to do that! Offer rewards so big that his best and truest pals will sell him. See here."

He struggled for something under his pillow, and after much difficulty he produced a small brass-handled key.

"Take this," he said, speaking with greater difficulty than ever now. "It is the key of the iron safe; you will find an iron ring under the mat in the shop. Lift up the trap. The iron box is there. Take all, all the house holds, use it all as I say; and until you lay him by the heels, I'll haunt you. D'ye hear?"

And he fixed his glassy eyes on the giant American.

He sank back.

They thought he was dead.

But he opened his eyes, and fixing his glance once more on Mr. Jefferson, he made one last effort to articulate.

It was one solitary word that he uttered, and was only just audible.

"Remember!"

And so he died with thoughts of vengeance on his mind and vows of vengeance upon his lips.

His eyes, fixed in death, rested upon Jefferson, as if to give more force to his dying injunction.

CHAPTER X.

THE STRING AND THE HOOK.

"Not quite so much noise there, if you please."

These words were addressed by Mr. Harkaway to his son Jack, who was playing with Nero at one end of the room, while he sat writing at the other.

"All right, dad," cried Jack; "we'll be quiet."

But the noise still continued.

The monkey had purloined some of his young master's property, which he refused to give up.

And he was now scampering about the apartment.

Springing from chair to chair in the liveliest possible manner, young Jack, with a switch in his hand, was pursuing him.

"It's this great thief, Nero, dad," returned young Jack; "he's been cabbaging my string and won't give it up."

The monkey had perched himself on the top of a cabinet in the room.

"I'll soon put a stop to that," said Mr. Harkaway.

As he spoke he picked up a pair of slippers and launched them at the monkey's head.

They were not hard enough to hurt, but just sufficient to dislodge Master Nero from his perch.

Down he came with a bang to the ground.

"Now I've got you," cried young Jack, as he sprang upon him.

Harkaway, then, as the shortest way of keeping Nero quiet, shut him up, for the present, in the cupboard.

Young Jack, in the meantime, was carefully winding the string upon a small piece of stick.

At the end of the string was a moderate-sized hook.

"What's that?" asked Mr. Harkaway of his son, with a smile glimmering on his features. "It means mischief, I think, doesn't it?"

He remembered his own boyish peculiarities, and fancied the hook looked a little suspicious.

"Oh, no, dad," answered Jack.

"Are you quite sure—quite sure that that hook is not intended for some respectable gentleman's hat, or unsuspecting old lady's bonnet?"

"Quite, dad, and I don't think you'd ever guess what this is from."

"Indeed!"

"No."

"Suppose you tell me, then."

"It's a memorial."

"A memorial!" echoed his father, with a smile. "Of what?"

There was a slight pause.

Then Jack said:

"You remember the night of the fire, dad?"

Mr. Harkaway was serious in a moment.

"Do I remember it! Shall I ever forget it?" he murmured, fervently.

"I never shall," said our young hero.

"No, my brave boy," warmly returned his father. "I shall never forget your brave conduct on that dreadful night."

"Well, on that night," continued Jack, "as I was helping to steady the ladder for you to descend, one of the hooks caught in my boot, and fixed itself so firmly that I was obliged to cut the hook away from the rope, and now I keep it in remembrance of your escape."

"I understand you my dear child," returned his parent with emotion, "and the feeling does you honor. Keep it then, and in years to come, long after your parents are in their graves, that simple memorial will recall the night when you hazarded your own life to save them from a cruel and terrible fate."

Having said this, he kissed Jack's rosy cheeks, and then, having finished the letter he was writing, he took his hat and went out.

Young Jack sat thoughtfully and in silence—a very

unusual thing for him—for some little time after his parent's departure.

At last Jack started up, saying:

"Dad's gone out; I don't see why I should not go too." The monkey, who was imprisoned in the cupboard, seemed to be of the same way of thinking, for he rattled the door and chirped vociferously.

"Ah! there's Nero wants to come, thought Jack; 'I mustn't leave him behind!'

So he went to the cupboard, and said:

"I suppose you're sorry for what you've done, ain't you?"

The monkey gave a penitent chirp.

"Very sorry, eh?"

"Chirp, chirp."

Jack turned the key and opened the door.

Out sprang Nero, and immediately evinced his contrition by tumbling head over heels and walking round the room on his hands.

"That'll do," said his young master; "you can drop that hanky panky now and be quiet."

Nero appeared to understand and squatted down quietly on the hearthrug, where he became absorbed in hunting his fleas.

Jack rang the bell.

Monday answered it.

"Are you particularly busy to-day?"

"Well, not particular, Massa Jack," answered Monday; "um got few little odd jobs, that's all."

"And how long will it take you to do these 'little odd jobs'?"

"Something like about half an hour. Why you ask?"

"Well, I was thinking of going out for a good long ramble, and if you had done your work, I should take you with me," replied our hero, condescendingly.

"Take this child wid you, Massa Jack! Golly, him cut along with de jobs like winking."

And away he hurried in a state of great exhilaration.

The Limbian, in the pride of his heart, went straight to where his comrade, Sunday, was busily engaged in polishing a pair of boots.

"What you tink, old Sun?" he said, his ebony countenance glistening with satisfaction.

"What?"

"Dis child have jess received a very kind invitation."

"Where from?"

"Massa Jack Harkaway."

"To go where?"

"Out along with him for a big spree."

Sunday dropped the boot he was polishing.

"Massa Jack might have asked dis child to go as well."

"What he want you out with him for, um like to know? Massa Jack only like de society of gentlemen," Monday replied, as he stuck out his chest and cocked his nose in the air conceitedly.

"You mean to say dis child not gentleman, den?" inquired the African, in an aggravated tone.

"Um mean to say," returned the other, "you not got de polish of dis child."

This was too much for Sunday's endurance.

"Take that, you impudent nigger!" he shouted, as, snatching up the boot, he threw it at his comrade, who caught it cleverly in his hand.

"Take it yourself, you black fellow!" cried Monday, as he threw it back.

Sunday also caught it—on his nose.

"There now, you've got the polish as well as me, yah! yah!" grinned Monday.

The African rushed after his comrade.

The latter dodged him nimbly.

"Phew! it's no good running after you, you are too quick for me," muttered Sunday, breathlessly, as he came to a standstill, and prepared to continue his labors.

"What you get in a passion for?" asked his comrade at length.

"Him not in a passion," Sunday answered.

"Am you prepared to forget and forgive?"

"Of course."

"Shake hands, den."

"Dere's mine," said the African, magnanimously, as he extended his hand.

"And dere's mine," returned the Limbian, as he took it.

"Now we friends ag'in."

It may seem strange that Sunday should have so suddenly forgiven his comrade.

But he had a plan of retribution in his head, which will presently appear.

"Well, now, den, him get on wid him lilly jobs," said Monday at length, "cos Massa Jack is waiting."

He was about to turn away when his comrade called him back.

"I say, Mon," he said, confidentially.

"What you say, Sun?"

"Tink you could drink lilly drop ob rale Jamaickey, if you got some?"

Monday opened his eyes and licked his lips longingly.

"Tink him jess could," he replied. "Am dere any?"

His comrade went through some very expressive pantomime, and eventually pointed to a door at a short distance.

It was where the coals were kept.

"Coal cellar rum place keep rum in, ain't it?" remarked Monday.

"Jess de proper place," replied his brother nigger, winking and putting his finger knowingly to the side of his nose; "keep um safe. No one 'spect find rum in de coal cellar."

"Dat true," admitted Monday, with a grin; "dat bery good idea."

"Fuss rate, I tink," grinned Sunday.

"Whar'bouts de bottle?" asked his comrade, as he approached the cellar.

"You find um standing on de shelf lilly way on de left side," Sunday explained.

Monday, licking his lips, eagerly opened the door, and went in.

No sooner did he disappear than the African stepped quietly after him, and listened chuckling to himself intently.

After a moment or two, Monday called out from the interior:

"Um can't find no rum."

"Good reason why; dere none to find. Yah, yah, yah," grinned Sunday in reply, as he turned the key in the lock. Monday heard the click.

"What dat you do?" he asked, rather suspiciously.

"Lock you in, dat's all," returned the African, with immense complacency. "Yah, yah, yah."

Monday sprang to the door.

But he was too late. It was fast.

In vain he raved and threatened and kicked at the door.

His comrade only laughed at him.

At this juncture a bell from up stairs rang loudly.

"Dere Mass Jack's bell," shouted Monday through the keyhole.

"Nebber mind de bell," replied Sunday, consolingly, as he took his departure; "dis chile answer um. You hab big spree wid de rats all by yourself among de coals. Yah, yah, yah."

"Where's Monday?" asked Jack, as the African answered his summons.

"Monday gone out, Massa Jack," replied the latter, without turning white at the fib.

"Gone out!" exclaimed our hero, in surprise.

"Yes, Massa Jack. Him gone out hab big spree."

"Um," muttered our hero to himself, "the silly fellow must have misunderstood me. No matter, I suppose I shall find him waiting outside."

"That's all, Sunday," he said aloud to the African.

"Want me to go wid you instead, Massa Jack?" urged the latter, modestly.

"No, thank you," answered our hero. "Nero and I will be company for each other."

Sunday made his exit rather ruefully.

He was disappointed, and his conscience pricked him into the bargain.

"Dat de punishment for not telling de truf," he muttered as he went down stairs.

"Come, old fellow," cried Jack to the monkey, as the door closed, "we may as well be off."

Up sprang Nero in an instant to follow his master.

The latter had reached the door, but suddenly he turned back.

He had forgotten his hook and string.

"I musn't leave you behind," he exclaimed, as he took them from the table and put them in his pocket; "you may be useful to me some day. Who knows?"

Who knows?

Who does know, when he leaves his home, what may happen to him before he returns?

CHAPTER XI.

NERO GETS INTO A SCRAPE, AND JACK GETS HIM OUT OF IT.

"Come along, Nero; keep close to me, and mind how you behave yourself."

These words were addressed by our young hero to his dumb companion as he stepped from the door of the hotel into the street.

Jack was in the most buoyant spirits.

Rejoicing in the beautiful day, he strode along with heart as light as the sky above his head.

Nero went hopping along by his young master's side in a very quiet and orderly manner for a monkey, only pausing occasionally to catch a tormenting flea.

Jack kept a very wide awake look-out as he went along after Monday, whom he fully expected to find either lounging against a lamppost waiting for him, or strutting along some of the thoroughfares as he passed on.

But no Monday came in sight.

This seemed strange to our hero, although it is not so to our readers, who know he is safely locked up in the coal hole of the hotel.

Jack and his comrade went on for some distance, until they approached one of the quays, beyond which the bright waters of the Hudson appeared in sight, sparkling in the sunshine.

Again he looked out across the water.

The more he looked, the more intense grew his desire to take a boat and to be gliding along its bosom.

"I'll have a boat; here goes. And Nero shall come with me; here, Nero, Nero!"

As he called, he turned to look for his companion.

He was no longer in sight.

"The rascal, to give me the slip like this," he murmured, fretfully; "I must go and see after him."

But ere he could leave the spot on which he stood, loud shouts reached his ears.

And the next moment Nero came in sight, bounding over the ground in fine style, with some light-looking article in his paw, pursued by the owner of the article, and followed by a yelling crowd.

The monkey, hissing and chattering, came straight up to where Jack was standing.

The crowd followed.

"What have you been up to now, eh, sir?" demanded his young master, as Nero reached him.

The monkey, who appeared vexed himself, grinned rather angrily, and held up the article he had secured.

It was a mass of light flaxen hair.

"Good gracious! what have you been stealing now?" exclaimed Jack. "Give it to me directly."

But Nero was obstinate, and refused to part with his treasure.

"Give it me, I say," repeated our hero.

The monkey, instead of obeying, hopped away and put it on his own head instead.

In spite of the vexation he felt, young Jack could scarcely refrain from laughing at the comical appearance the animal presented.

He looked like a dried-up specimen of some ancient judge.

But before he had time to take any further steps, the crowd had reached him.

Foremost among the multitude was a very tall young gentleman of the swell order, in a raving state of excitement.

He appeared certainly to have been pretty well mauled.

His light coat was torn to ribbons.

His dickey (for he wore a false one) hung by a tape and fluttered in the wind.

One of his moustaches had disappeared.

And his head was as bald as a badger.

"I demand the life of that venomous brute!" raved the young gentleman, breathlessly, as he arrived at the spot.

Nero had wisely taken shelter behind his master, where he sat winking and blinking and chattering, with his eyes fixed sharply on his denouncer.

"Why do you demand his life?" asked Jack, quietly.

"Why?" shrieked the indignant speaker, in a shrill tone, "because I do, and I'll have it, too!"

"Will you?" thought our hero; "not if I know it."

And then he asked again:

"What has he done?"

"What?" shouted the young gentleman, fiercely;

"look at me. What do I look like, eh?"

"Something between a Guy Fawkes and a scarecrow," returned Jack, who could not restrain the impulse to joke.

The crowd laughed unanimously, and our hero felt he had, at all events, made his first point.

"If I am a scarecrow," exclaimed the sufferer passionately. "it's all through that infernal monkey. Let me get at him."

"You'd better mind," counselled Jack.

But the young gentleman was deaf to expostulations, and wouldn't mind.

He made a frantic rush at Nero, for the purpose of annihilating him on the spot.

Instead of which, Nero astonished him by a terrific snap at his fingers with his sharp teeth.

At which the young gentleman roared lustily.

"I told you you'd better mind," said Jack coolly.

"I insist upon that darned vicious brute being destroyed instantly!" shouted the youth. "Knock its brains out. Will anybody oblige me?"

He looked round at the crowd, but no one responded to this appeal.

"Why don't you knock them out yourself, if you're so anxious?" suggested Jack here.

"Because he's afraid," cried a voice from the crowd.

Our hero could see, from the expression of the faces that surrounded him, that the crowd was rather for than against him.

This gave him confidence, and he replied, in a bantering tone:

"I beg your pardon, Mr.—Mr.—what's your name?"

"His name is Norval," cried an English actor from the crowd; "on the Grampian Hills his father feeds his flocks."

"It's a darned lie!" shouted the young gentleman; "my name is Long—Lanky Long, and my father doesn't feed any flock."

"Bravo, Lanky!" and a laugh from the crowd.

"Very well, then, Mr. Long, Nero is considered a very handsome specimen of the monkey tribe, and I cannot have him injured."

"Ugh! the diabolical wretch," growled the young gentleman; "he ought to be skewered, roasted, boiled, hung, drawn and quartered, the darned object."

"I don't see that he has done any harm," said Jack, coolly.

"No harm!" almost shrieked the long young gentleman; "my coat torn to ribbons—"

"Never mind," laughed our hero, cheerfully, "it'll make it good for trade. Buy another."

A laugh from the crowd, and "Bravos!" from three tailors.

"My shirt front—"

"Dicky, you mean," from Jack.

"Torn to shreds; my moustache dragged out by the roots."

"You should have glued it on stronger."

Another roar from the crowd.

"All my hair plucked off my head."

"What can you expect if you wear a wig?"

Again the crowd yelled with delight at Jack's daring rejoinders.

"Yes," continued our hero, addressing the bystanders on behalf of his dumb companion, "this sagacious creature can't bear to be poked with a cane, as it always gives him the collywobbles in his pandenoodles, and then no one can manage him."

This last speech brought the affair to a crisis with a roar. Jack contrived to get Mr. Long's property out of Nero's clutches and restore it to its owner.

And the dishevelled young gentleman, amid the derisive laughter of the multitude, sneaked away with his wig on the wrong side foremost.

A few moments more, and Jack and Nero were once more alone.

"There, I've got you out of that mess," said the former, as he looked down upon the monkey, who was squatted at his feet; "and now we're going on the river. Do you understand?"

The chimpanzee grinned and nodded, as much as to say, "Perfectly."

"Come on, then; and mind, no more tricks for to-day. Forward, to the river."

As they retreated, two men stepped from behind a projection that had previously concealed them from view, and looked hatefully after them.

Unnoticed and unsuspected, Hunston and Toro, disguised, had separated from the rest of Emmerson's gang; they had mingled with the crowd, and heard all that had passed, and had received a tolerably good specimen of the coolness of the boy.

It seemed to suggest that, if he lived to be a man, he would be as hard a nut to crack as his father.

"Is it worth while following him?" said Toro, moodily, as our hero disappeared.

"It may be," returned his companion.

"We can't do much in broad daylight," muttered the giant, regretfully.

"No, curse it! Fortune seems to go against us with this young whelp," exclaimed Hunston, petulantly.

"Yes. But the wheel will be reversed before long, perhaps, and then it will be our turn!"

"This brat seems to have the luck of his father," remarked Toro.

"Yes, and he's the image of him," admitted Hunston, surlily.

"And he's got his father's bulldog pluck besides, and that's worse," grumbled Toro.

"Corpo di Baccho! Did you hear the young bantam cackling to the crowd?"

"Of course I did. I felt as though I should have liked to have strangled him as he spoke."

"And that infernal grinning chimpanzee, too," said the Italian, vindictively; "I shall never be satisfied till I've knocked the ugly brute's brains out."

"Never mind him; he has no tongue, and can say nothing against us."

"But he has nails, and he can scratch," exclaimed Toro, with a very wry face.

"I can vouch for that," said Hunston, "and I'll pay him off for old scores some day for what he's done; but now never mind him; let us think of the boy."

"He is going to take a boat."

"Most likely; he's fond of water."

"But come," exclaimed Hunston at length; "while we are talking, our prey is moving away from us. Let us move on."

"I'm ready."

"Be cautious, and keep as much out of sight as possible. This precocious imp has sharp eyes."

"Our disguise is perfect; not even the detectives could recognize us as we are dressed," said Toro.

The two accomplices walked forward, and reached the quay just in time to behold one of the steam passenger boats that plied from one side of the river to the other, leaving the pier with its living freight.

On the deck of this boat stood young Jack and Nero the monkey.

Hunston and Toro looked significantly at each other.

"What do you understand by the young pup being on board the ferryboat?" asked the former.

"He is crossing, perhaps, for a walk up the country, or a ramble in the woods—anything," said Toro.

These words acted like a spark of fire to gunpowder. Hunston's eyes suddenly blazed up with a fierce glare.

"A ramble in the woods," he repeated with intense vehemence "fiends grant he may."

"I see, you would still follow him."

"I would, I would," exclaimed the malignant Hunston, desperately, "follow him into the dim shadows of those giant trees. Once there, my prey should not escape me; I'd torture him."

"I'd help you."

"Kill him piecemeal, Indian fashion."

"Bleed him slowly, drop by drop."

"Oh! that we may have the chance; oh! that we may."

"Now let us go and have a cigar and a brandy smash; we will there arrange our plans."

Arm and arm, the two ruffians walked toward a drinking bar to drink brandy, and plot murder of the most horrible and atrocious character.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE TRACK.

HUNSTON and his companion hurried down to the water's edge.

Mingling with the crowd, but taking care to keep as much out of sight as possible.

The brandy they had drank had not destroyed their caution.

It had only added fire to their vindictive passions.

The passenger boat had returned.

Eagerly did the two accomplices watch the passengers as they disembarked.

Our hero and his companion were not among them.

"Good! good!" muttered Hunston, as the last passenger stepped ashore; "they remain on the other side."

"Good for us—bad for them!" remarked Toro, significantly.

"Ye—es," thoughtfully replied his comrade, with an evil glitter in his eyes. "I think fortune is going to favor us at last."

"Well, and what are you going to do now?"

"Cross over by the next boat."

"And go after them, eh, as we arranged?"

"Yes, after the boy," growled Hunston, emphatically, between his teeth; "d—n the monkey. I take no notice of him."

"I mean to square accounts with the brute by knocking his brains out," grinned the brigand.

"With all my heart. Now let us go on board."

In a few moments the partners in villainy were smoking their cigars on the deck.

Having received its complement of passengers, the boat was about to leave the pier.

Suddenly a voice was heard shouting vociferously—

"Stop de ship; dis chile goin' across!"

It was our sable friend, Monday, who had just reached the spot, and came hurrying along at a good speed for a negro.

As the vessel had not yet begun to move, there was no occasion for it to stop.

Monday had time to get on before it started.

It will be remembered that he had been somewhat treacherously consigned to the quiet seclusion of the coal cellar.

But on getting out, he started to look after young Jack.

And by dint of asking everyone he met if they had seen anything of Massa Jack and his monkey, he was guided to the quay.

But those he sought were not to be found there, from the fact that they were already on the other side of the river.

Monday was informed of this circumstance by the loiterers at the pier, who had seen them depart.

And he said to himself:

"Dey gone across, dis chile go arter 'em."

Accordingly, after them he went.

And was now aboard a ferry boat, straining his eyes anxiously towards the opposite shore.

Trying hard, but failing to catch a glimpse of his young master and Nero.

But, while thus engaged, he was not aware that he was closely watched by two of the passengers.

Hunston and Toro, who were scrutinizing the negro with scowling brow.

"That darkey belongs to Harkaway. I know the brute well," remarked Hunston at length, in an undertone.

"What the devil does he want here?"

"It's pretty clear what. Look how the black rascal rolls his eyes across the water. He is going after the boy, I suppose," Hunston muttered to himself, growlingly.

"That's it," briefly returned the brigand.

"Let him go on. He'll go too far for himself if he doesn't take care. I have a trifle or two to settle with him."

"And he will find some trouble in getting back again, perhaps," grinned Toro.

Hunston remained silent and thoughtful for a moment.

Then he said, reflectively:

"This Monday is likely to be very much in our way."

"Unless we put him out of it," replied his companion, coolly.

"Then we will put him out of it," said Hunston, in a tone of determination.

"There won't be much difficulty about that," Toro continued. "It's nice and quiet on the opposite side."

"True, a death cry or the report of a popper would scarcely be heard."

"No, especially a mile or so up the river."

"And how do you propose getting rid of the black?"

"I should be guided by circumstances," replied the Italian, with a cool shrug of his shoulders.

"How do you mean?"

"If the spot was retired, we might knock his brains out with a bludgeon."

"Pshaw! niggers have no brains."

"Well, then, we could give him a leaden pill between his ribs."

"That's better."

"Or send him flying from the path into the river, and fire at him from the bank."

"That would be the best sport," muttered Hunston, gloatingly.

Whilst this interesting conversation was terminated by the arrival of the boat at the opposite pier, the passengers disembarked.

Monday, eager to continue his search after his young master, was amongst the first to leave the vessel.

Hunston and Toro were the very last.

It was their policy to let Monday go on ahead.

Whilst they kept him in sight and followed at a distance.

The black, on stepping ashore, made his way at once to the footpath that ran along by the river's bank.

Here instinctively he began to examine the ground with scrutinizing attention.

In his own country he had often traced a friend or a foe by their footprints.

He had not searched more than a few seconds when he uttered an exclamation of joy.

"Here dey am," he cried; "here de marks of de monkey's paws. Dey gone dis way."

For some distance he continued his course in this manner.

But never thinking, in his eagerness, of once looking behind him.

Gradually the city on the opposite bank was left in the rear.

The path grew more solitary.

The footmarks had ceased to continue in a line with the path.

Monday came to a halt.

The sun was shining hotly down upon his head.

"Him tink him jess hab lilly drop of rum 'fore him go on again," he soliloquized.

Taking a flask from his pocket he took what he called a little, but which some might have thought a tolerably large drop.

As he was replacing the cork some sound seemed to strike upon his quick ears, for he suddenly assumed an attitude of Indian caution and listened.

"What dat?" he muttered to himself, in a low, suspicious tone.

Hastily thrusting the bottle into his pocket, he looked back along the road he had just traversed. No one was in sight.

Nothing was visible but nature, smiling in the bright sunlight of that lovely day.

But this did not allay Monday's suspicions.

He could not believe his ears had deceived him.

"Him almost take him oath him hear footsteps!" he exclaimed, thoughtfully.

And then he stretched himself full length along the path, and placing his ear close to the ground remained in that position listening for several moments.

When he again raised his head, there was no longer any doubt in the expression of his face.

His dark eyes flashed with certainty as he directed their gaze toward the river's bank.

And Monday looked, as of old, a brave and cautious Indian.

"Whoever dey am, dey dere," he ejaculated, as he pointed in that direction.

At a short distance from where he stood, the river wound into a sort of creek. It was upon this spot his eyes were fastened.

But he did not long remain inactive.

With a step as wary as that of some wild animal approaching the river's bank to slake its thirst, Monday drew near the edge of the creek.

As he came on, the murmuring of voices caught his ear, and made him pause.

They were the voices of Hunston and his comrade.

The bank was high, and the vindictive pursuers, having advanced thus far unsuspected, had concealed themselves there the better to watch the direction the black was taking, feeling confident that to follow him would be the readiest means of finding young Jack.

It was as they ran hastily up and plunged into this retreat that their footsteps had first become audible to Monday.

Throwing himself once more flat upon the ground, he approached the edge of the creek with the writhing, snake-like motion of an Indian on the war trail.

Having proceeded in this manner to the utmost limit that prudence permitted, he stopped and listened, trying to hear what those below were saying.

In this he was successful.

He could hear distinctly.

The conversation, too, at that moment, was particularly interesting, the subject being himself.

"Ha, ha!" he heard one of the speakers say, with a laugh, "the black beggar's stopping to consider which path to take next."

"Yes, and to have a suck at his flask. Corpi Baccho! how fond these niggers are of rum."

It was Toro who had just spoken.

His words rather tickled the "black beggar," who was listening above.

"Dat true enough," he admitted to himself, with a grim; "darkies like ole Jamaickey; dat am a fact."

Hunston then continued:

"I am inclined to think, from the way in which the negro examined the grass, that Master Jack Harkaway must have branched off about this spot across the country."

"Very likely; all the better if he has," returned Toro.

"We must keep close upon Monday, and it's hard if we can't settle him between us."

"A pull of a trigger, or a stab with one of our knives, will get rid of the carrion," said Hunston, with contemptuous indifference, "and then there will only remain the boy to dispose of."

"And the monkey," suggested Toro.

"I leave the beast to you," returned his companion, in a tone of disgust.

"I'll attend to him."

As Monday listened to the foregoing ominous words, the smile died out of his face. His eyes glared fiercely.

His broad chest heaved up and down like a wave of the sea.

Not with fear, but excitement, mingled with horror.

The negro, although he had not seen the speakers, had formed a pretty correct conception who they were.

His honest heart was filled with indignation.

"Dey think dis chile lead 'em whar de dear young massa gone, do dey?" he murmured inwardly to himself.

"Him be shot twenty times ober fuss, and den him wouldn't, de dam skunks!"

Monday, in his wrath, felt strongly inclined to thrust his head over the edge of the bank, and tell the lurking villains what he thought of them.

But prudence held him back.

He was unarmed.

His young master was ahead, on this solitary side of the river.

Unsuspecting of danger, he would certainly return the same way he went.

Nothing could prevent him from falling into the hands of the wretches who waited for him, thirsting like savage tigers for his innocent blood.

Nothing—but one thing.

That was forcing the murderers to retrace their steps.

But how was this to be accomplished?

His foes were two to one.

Armed, too, to the teeth, whilst he had no weapon of any kind.

Not that he would have feared even these odds in defence of his master's child.

But he felt strongly that the life of that child depended now upon his own.

"If dis child get shot, him not much good certainly," he argued to himself; "but what poor Massa Jack do?"

This somewhat complicated list of thoughts has taken some little time to embody in words.

But they rushed through Monday's excited brain with the rapidity of lightning.

He was in a most embarrassing position.

But just at this moment, to his dismay, he heard one of the men below say:

"I wonder what that infernal nigger's up to by this time? Look out; it is time."

"I will," returned Toro, to whom the words were addressed.

As he spoke the giant slowly raised his head above the upper ridge of the bank.

"Hullo!"

He found himself confronted by a black face, a pair of gleaming eyes, and a set of very white teeth, clenched desperately together.

The noses of the negro and the Italian almost touched each other.

No wonder the latter was astonished.

"Diavolo!" he ejaculated, in a startled tone, and seemed inclined to bob his head down again.

But Monday never stirred.

He kept this large brown eyes fixed and glaring at Toro. Toro glared at him.

For a few seconds not a word was spoken.

At length Toro, having recovered from the slight start he had received, growled out, very emphatically:

"Who, in the devil's name, are you?"

"Dat de identical question dis chile war going to ax yourself," was Monday's reply.

"We're gentlemen," exclaimed Hunston, in a contemptuous tone, showing his face above the bank for the first time.

"Dis child gen'leman too," returned the negro, rising to his knees, and looking down upon those he addressed.

"And what do you want here, prying about, eh?" Hunston inquired.

"Tell dis child what you want fust, dan him tell you what him wants," was the equitable answer he received.

This at once roused Hunston's inflammable temper to an ungovernable pitch, and, throwing aside all self-control, he shouted, fiercely—

"I'm here to take the life of that young cub, Jack Harkaway, you black son of Satan! Do you understand that, eh?"

Monday's broad features became convulsed at these words.

His lips quivered, and his eyes rolled ominously, as he replied:

"No, him don't; but him tell you why dis child here. Him here to save de life of Massa Jack from you two white debbills. You understand dat, eh?"

An ironical burst of malignant laughter answered this appeal.

"You save his life!" exclaimed Hunston, mockingly "You! Put a bullet into him, Toro," he shouted.

"With pleasure," returned the brigand, readily, as he thrust his hand into his pocket in quest of his weapon.

It was a critical moment for our friend Monday.

But, just at that instant, he was inspired with a brilliant thought, and, before Toro could produce his revolver, his negro opponent drew forth his weapon, and levelled it at the head of his adversary.

This formidable implement was, after all, only his rum flask.

But, as he concealed the body of the bottle in his large hand, the neck, which protruded, represented the barrel very effectively.

"Now, den," he cried, determinedly, to Toro, "de minnit you take your hand out of your pocket, dat minnit I shall pull dis trigger, and blow you to mortal smash."

The Italian kept his hand where it was; but Hunston, whose patience was rapidly becoming exhausted, quickly detected the imposition.

"What are you afraid of?" he shouted. "Don't you see it is only a liquor flask?"

This restored the brigand's self-possession, and he sprang up the bank, and opposed his giant bulk against the stalwart but less formidable proportions of the Limbian.

At the same time he drew his revolver from his pocket and cocked it.

Another moment and it would have been probably pointed at Monday's head.

But Hunston checked him.

A better idea had taken possession of his mind.

"Hold!" he exclaimed, as he laid his hand upon his comrade's arm.

"Hold!—for why?" asked Toro.

Hunston answered, in a low tone:

"He must first serve our turn; after that, kill him as soon as you please."

"Right," returned the brigand, as he lowered the hammer of his weapon, and placed it in a belt which he wore round his waist.

Monday's quick eyes noticed this.

His quick ears, too, had caught the remark made by Hunston.

In an instant he had decided upon his course of action; and, with a tremendous bound, he sprang forward, and, with one determined wrench, dragged the revolver from the resting place to which Toro had just consigned it.

The giant fairly staggered at this daring feat, and then he recoiled several paces in dismay.

Hunston strode forward with a threatening gesture.

But it was only to find the six barrels pointed at his face, and looking at him like so many angry eyes.

It was now Monday's time to crouch.

"Now, den," he cried, exultingly, "de best thing you two fellahs to do am jess to turn round and go back same way as you come. If not, sure as this chile's name Monday, him gib both ob you more pills dan you like to take."

Hunston turned pale, and bit his lips till the blood started.

Toro glared moodily from under his thick eyebrows at the sable hero.

"We'd better make a move, or pretend to do so," he muttered, in an undertone, to his comrade. "I'll drop upon the black devil in a minute."

At the same moment he glided his hand into his pocket, and brought forth something, which he concealed in the palm of his hand.

This something was a thick elastic ring, which he presently slipped upon his left wrist, where it was concealed by the sleeve of his coat.

"Come, move on, you white debbills!" cried Monday, impatiently. "You know the way—straight ahead."

As he spoke he pointed imperatively forward with the weapon he grasped.

The two accomplices slowly commenced their retreat.

Toro whispered a few words to his companion as they went.

Hunston nodded in reply, and asked, in a low tone:

"When?"

"As soon as we reach the other side of the creek," was Toro's answer.

In a few seconds they had reached this spot, Monday, like a faithful custodian, following almost close behind them, with the revolver pointed and ready for immediate use.

"Now's the time," whispered the Italian, hurriedly.

Hunston suddenly stopped, and looked behind him.

"There he is!" he exclaimed, with assumed eagerness, as he pointed over the negro's shoulder.

"Massa Jack!" cried Monday, with vivid excitement, thrown off his guard, and looking quickly round.

Quick as thought, Hunston bounded forward and gripped the revolver.

Monday turned with a startled yell.

But ere any struggle could take place, Toro crept quietly behind, and took from his wrist the elastic ring.

Then, by an effort of his immense strength, having

expanded it sufficiently, he slipped it dexterously over the head and shoulders of the negro.

The strong contractive power of the ligature acted like a vice.

Poor Monday was completely fettered.

His arms were fixed to his side as though they had been glued there.

Taking advantage of his embarrassment, Hunston wrenched the revolver from his grip, and battered him cruelly with the stock about the face and head.

The burly Toro punched him with his massive fists.

Monday, from the helpless condition of his hands, was quite unable to defend himself.

Step by step he drew back stunned and bewildered by the sudden and ferocious attack.

He neared the edge of the creek.

Toro saw his advantage, and with a yell of demoniac triumph he sprang forward, just as Hunston fired, and struck the negro a tremendous final blow on the forehead with his clenched fist.

It was severe enough to have felled an ox, and it sent Monday flying backward into the middle of the creek with a loud splash.

The black was usually a splendid swimmer, but he was now stunned and helpless.

Accordingly, after the first commotion had subsided, the waters closed over him.

Only a few bubbles rising to the surface revealed what was going on beneath.

The ruffians shouted with fiendish glee at the success of their plan.

"Let's give him a bullet for luck!" cried Toro, brutally, Bang went a revolver.

"There's mine," exclaimed Hunston, with a sardonic laugh. Bang again.

"And there's one more," grinned the giant.

A few bubbles and some streaks of blood floating up and reddening the surface proved that the shots had taken effect.

"Good-bye, Monday," cried Hunston, with a mocking sneer; "now I have paid you for your services to Jack Harkaway."

"To the devil with you, you black brute," growled Toro.

"And now for the boy, Jack Harkaway."

Having said this, Hunston turned from the spot, followed by his comrade.

A few moments later they were hastening across the country in search of a fresh victim, while in the river creek, close under the bank, lay a dark body, washed ashore by the tide.

It was the body of the hapless negro Monday.

And poor young Jack was to be Hunston's and the giant Toro's next victim.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE TOILS.

TEMPTED by the beauty of the day, and little thinking of the great danger that followed him, our young hero wandered on till he reached a spot where the trees began to grow thicker and closer.

"A wood!" he exclaimed, joyously; "that's jolly, I like woods. Come on, Nero, old boy, we shall have some fun here."

Nero grinned and chattered, clambering up one tree and down another, and swinging himself from branch to branch in a reckless manner, that proved him to be perfectly at home in such acrobatic feats.

Jack had taken the precaution to bring a packet of sandwiches.

And having arrived at a convenient spot, he resolved to halt there and have dinner.

Nero also had his enjoyment at the same time, which consisted of seizing upon the table-napkin and mounting with it up to some neighboring branch, where he sat looking down with his round, cunning eyes at his master, and gibbering a strange patois, which, if translated from the monkey dialect, would probably have been:

"Catch me if you can."

"Bring down my napkin directly, sir!" cried young Jack, laughing, as he shook his fist at the robber. "Do you hear?"

Nero heard, and replied by flourishing the piece of damask, and exclaiming:

"Chirp, chirp!"

Which evidently meant:

"Don't you wish you may get it?"

"Will you come down?" shouted our hero.

"Chirp, chirp!" and a shake of the head from Nero.

"Very well, sir; then I shall come up after you, and pull you down by your tail."

Our young hero, for his age, was an expert climber, and as fearless as he was expert.

As he was climbing, he could just catch an indistinct view of the monkey at a considerable height above him.

A few more moments of hard work brought Jack within reach of Nero's tail.

"Now I've got you!" he cried, as he made a grasp at that useful member.

But the monkey, quick as thought, sprang into the branches of the tree adjoining.

This feat, though perfectly easy to a monkey, was utterly impossible for a boy to perform.

And there Nero sat, mischievously nibbling the napkin with his sharp teeth.

"Drop it, you aggravating rascal, do!" cried our hero; "if you don't I'll—"

Without waiting to hear his sentence pronounced, the monkey suddenly uttered a shrill squeak, and, dropping the napkin, made a wild spring into the adjacent branches, and was soon out of sight.

The napkin had fluttered to the ground, and Jack thought the sooner he followed it the better.

Accordingly he began to descend.

"I wonder what dad would say if he could only see me now," he said to himself, as he went on, "and Monday, dear old Monday! I wish he was—"

He broke off suddenly, for he fancied he heard a subdued laugh beneath.

"It must be Monday," he said to himself, "who has followed us. I hope it is."

He continued his descent, calling as he did so—

"Is that you, Mon, old fellow?"

"Come down and see," replied a voice from below.

It was not the honest voice of his friend, however, that reached his ear; but the stern, cold tones that chilled his blood, he remembered only too well; he had heard them before.

Clinging to the branch that supported him, he looked down.

Beneath the tree stood Hunston and his gigantic companion Toro.

The deadliest enemies of his father and himself.

Their eyes were fixed upon him.

He could almost read their intentions in their looks.

And these seemed to be summed up in one awful word:

"Death."

Death without mercy, in that silent, secluded wood.

For a moment, as if fascinated, our hero remained gazing at his foes beneath, and they at him.

At length, from the lips of Hunston, oozed forth the imperative command:

"Come down!"

"No, thank you," coolly replied Jack, who, in spite of his position, had all his wits about him.

"Come down, I say," Hunston repeated, in a louder tone.

"I shan't," returned our hero, with something like a smile of defiance glimmering in his eyes; "I think I'm better where I am."

"I order you to come down!"

"What do you want with me?" asked Jack.

"I'll tell you when you reach the ground," Hunston replied.

"I'm not coming to the ground; I can't trust you," replied our hero. "If you've anything to tell me, tell me here."

Hunston bit his lip with rage.

"If you don't come down this instant, you whelp, I'll fetch you down in double-quick time."

"Will you? You'll not find it quite so easy as you think to climb this tree."

His listeners, in spite of their aggravation, uttered a hoarse laugh at this innocent idea, and Hunston asked, in a sneering tone:

"Who's going to climb the tree, eh?"

"Didn't you say, if I wouldn't come down, you'd fetch me down in double quick time?" Jack replied.

"I did, and so I will," growled his enemy.

"I don't see how you can do that without climbing," returned our hero, in a quiet tone of assurance.

The ruffians below laughed again.

"You young idiot!" exclaimed Hunston. "There are ways of bringing down a refractory boy without climbing after him."

As he spoke, he drew from his pocket a revolver.

Toro did the same.

"Do you see this?" cried Hunston, as he held up his weapon.

"And this?" asked his companion as he displayed his.

Poor Jack saw both too plainly, and felt that he had but little chance.

"It's all over with me," he murmured to himself.

"These are the messengers we intend to send up the tree after you," continued Hunston. "they're capital climbers."

Toro laughed loudly.

"Now, then, are you coming down?" Hunston inquired.

"No, I'm not," returned Jack, determinately; "if you mean to shoot me I'd just as soon be shot up here as on the ground."

"It won't be good for you if you remain where you are another minute," growled Hunston. "Stop your chatter and come down."

But far from obeying, the young climber only shook his head, and clung more firmly to the branch that sustained him.

A muttered oath burst from Hunston's lips, and he conferred for an instant with his companion.

The brief conference over, they cocked their revolvers, and levelled them towards himself.

It was an awful moment.

Our hero felt his heart throbbing like a giant hammer against his ribs.

"Pray God help me, and bless my dear father and mother, and little Emily," was his simple prayer.

Then he quietly closed his eyes, and waited for his deathstroke.

Bang—crash!

Bang—crash!

The two revolvers had been discharged.

"Strange," thought young Jack, "I am not touched."

The bullets had buried themselves in the branch to which he was clinging, instead of his body.

"Will you descend?"

"No!"

Again the weapons were levelled.

Again their report rang out through the wood.

Bang—crash!

Bang—crash!

Still he was unscathed.

The bullets had pierced the branch as before.

What did it mean?

The men who were firing at him were good shots.

It was hardly likely they would miss their aim.

Once more the revolvers were discharged, but without any harm to him.

Were they only trying to frighten him?

He almost began to think it must be so, when again and again the weapons belched forth their contents.

Suddenly the mystery was explained.

At the last shot the branch, which had been repeatedly pierced by bullets, creaked for a moment, and then, assisted by the weight of the body attached to it, broke short off.

Our hero had no time to save himself.

Down he came headlong, crashing through the branches and now lay prostrate on the ground at the very feet of his foe.

The branches of the tree had broken Jack's fall, but he felt giddy and shaken by the tumble he had had.

When he opened his eyes, the first objects he saw were the forms of Hunston and the giant Toro bending over him.

"You see I have brought you down, my sprightly youth," grinned the former, mockingly.

"And now you've brought me down, what are you going to do with me?" asked the plucky boy, boldly.

"We'll soon let you know what, you impudent pup!" growled Toro. "I know what I will do with you."

Then he thrust his hand into his pocket, and produced a piece of cord.

"Now, then," he cried to Jack, as he held it up before him, "do you know what this is for?"

"No, I don't; nor do I want to know," returned our hero, doggedly.

"I'll tell you, then," replied Toro, with a demoniac grin; "it's to tie your feet together."

Our hero sprang up from the ground.

"I won't be tied," he exclaimed, defiantly, making a bolt at the same time.

"Won't you?" cried the Italian, mockingly, as he swooped down upon him like a vulture, and held him fast.

"No, I won't," returned the prisoner, still struggling vainly to get free.

"Oh, yes, you will," continued Toro, "and be hung up by the heels."

"Let me go!" cried Jack, excitedly, as he struck out with his clenched fists, and kicked with all his might.

"We'll soon stop your kicking," snarled Hunston, as, by a sweep of his foot, he knocked our hero off his legs.

Toro pounced on him in a moment and wound the cord tightly round and round his ankles, as an enormous spider might have wound up a hapless fly in his web.

"Now, then, pinion his arms; quick!" cried Hunston, gloatingly, as he watched the proceedings. Toro felt in his pocket.

But he had no more cord.

"Take this," said his comrade, as he threw him Jack's damask napkin, which, in his eager excitement, he had twisted into a wisp.

"The very thing," grinned Toro, as he caught it.

Resistance was useless.

What could one poor boy do against two powerful men?

Young Jack Harkaway was perfectly helpless in the power of his remorseless assailants.

"Up with him," shouted Hunston; "I long to see the young cub hanging."

"Ha, ha! with his head downwards," added Toro, with a ferocious chuckle.

As he spoke, the brigand took up his helpless victim with one hand, as though he had been a bundle of wood or wool, and carried him to a tree, from which a branch projected about six feet from the ground.

"I shall want something to tie him up with," said Toro, as he stood carelessly swinging his human bundle to and fro.

"Anything will do," returned Hunston, hastily; "here, use my silk handkerchief."

As he spoke, he dragged his silk handkerchief from his pocket, and thrust it into Toro's hand.

"That will do. Now then, amico, mio, perhaps you'll hold our sprightly young friend whilst I tie him up by the heels."

"I will," replied Hunston, readily, as he made a step towards the helpless prisoner.

But ere he could reach him a very unexpected incident took place.

A violent agitation was perceptible amongst the branches above, and a heavy body came plunging down upon Hunston's head.

Hunston found his hat suddenly knocked over his eyes and himself hurled to the ground.

The heavy body was no other than Nero the monkey.

The sagacity of the animal on his return at once recognized Hunston and Toro as dangerous customers.

Instinctively he seemed to divine that they meditated evil to Jack, and that under the circumstances strong measures ought to be adopted.

Accordingly, he commenced, as we have described, by dropping upon Hunston, and, having flogged his foe, he went to work with his teeth and nails in true monkey fashion.

Hunston's hair was tugged out by handfuls.

His nose was pulled till he hardly knew whether he had any nose at all.

His face was riddled with scratches, like the bars of a gridiron.

In vain he struck out wildly and strove to escape from his assailant.

The monkey was immensely strong.

Each time he made a blow Nero retaliated by a bite or a scratch.

When he strove to escape the monkey pulled him back by the leg, and rolled over and over with him, each time doing Hunston some injury.

Hunston, bruised and breathless, and unable either to conquer or fly, became desperate.

"Help, help, Toro!" he gasped, wildly; this infernal brute's knocking the life out of me."

"I'll be down upon him," answered the brigand, as he drew his knife.

As he approached the spot, however, where the struggle was continuing, a new idea suggested itself.

Nero's tail was towards him.

The giant brigand, seeing Hunston getting the worst of the fight, sprang forward and seized the monkey with both hands by his tail.

Nero uttered a tremendous squeal at finding himself thus assaulted.

But before he could take any steps for his deliverance, he was being whirled round and round in the air with tremendous rapidity by the strong arms of the giant.

Poor Nero was quite helpless.

And his captor having swung him in this manner until (monkey though he was) his brains were completely turned, he dashed his head with tremendous force against the trunk of the tree.

This was a settler for poor, helpless Nero.

The last blow was a cruel one, and the poor, faithful monkey lay on the ground, lifeless, motionless.

It was with a sickening sensation our young hero watched these dreadful proceedings.

The only friend who could have helped him was now past helping even himself.

His cruel foes were upon him in a moment.

Hunston smarting from his wounds, and more deadly and implacable than ever.

"Now then," he hissed between his teeth, savagely, "string the boy up."

As he spoke, he stooped down and dragged his fettered victim roughly up by his heels.

He could only protest against the brutal treatment he was receiving, whilst Toro was performing his hangman's office.

"You'll be punished for this, both of you," cried Jack.

"Psha," growled Hunston.

"You are sure to be found out."

"Ha, ha! Who's to find us?"

"My father will," returned our hero, with strong confidence.

"Your father be—!" burst out the malignant Hunston; "he's nothing but a lying, boasting braggart."

"My father's a gentleman, and never told a lie in his life," boldly retorted young Jack; "that's more than you can say."

"Chatter away you young whelp!" Hunston hissed between his teeth; "your magpie tongue will soon be quiet enough, and then your bold father shall know where you are and it shall go hard with us if we do not serve him in the same way; how do you like our plan you young beast?"

"Wait till the blood begins to run into his head, and then he can inform us. Ho! ho!" shouted Toro.

"Wretches!" murmured the poor boy, at these horrible words. "My father will avenge me."

"Ha, ha, ha!" shouted Hunston, mockingly. "Let him do his worst, I defy him."

"Father, father, where are you? Am I to perish like this? Oh, do come," and the brave boy strained his eyes anxiously around, as if half expecting to see his parent hurrying to the spot.

But, alas! he came not.

He was far away at that moment, entirely ignorant of the deadly peril that threatened his darling son.

"Ah! you may look, but no help will reach you here," said the villain Hunston.

"Poor dad will never know my fate," murmured Jack, mournfully; "I hope he won't."

"Oh, yes, he will," hissed Hunston between his teeth, "he shall."

"I pray not; it would break his heart."

"Ay! break his heart, that's what I desire," roared Hunston.

"I'll take care he shall know your fate," he continued; "I'll take care he shall come here, here to this very spot, here to find you, his pretty sailor boy, his darling pet, dangling by the heels from this branch, dead, and to learn that I, Hunston, was his executioner. Ha, ha! this will be revenge indeed. Jack Harkaway's son and heir hung like a cur. Ha, ha, ha!"

And a fiendish laugh burst from the wretch's throat.

"Now, my boy, try how it feels," grinned Toro. "You can let him go."

Hunston threw young Jack from him with brutal violence, and the poor boy was swinging to and fro, suspended from the branch by his heels with his head downward, there to die a horrible death, whilst his murderers stood by, eager to gloat over his expiring agonies.

Young Jack, as our readers well know, was no coward. He was his father—Jack Harkaway—over again, staunch to the backbone.

But his present awful position might have appalled the stoutest heart.

And the poor boy, if the truth must be told, felt inclined to give in and plead for mercy.

"But what would be the use? No," he thought, "I won't ask."

Even then his spirit triumphed.

"If I must die, I must," he murmured to himself, and prepared himself to meet his coming fate.

For a short time he strove to bear up against the sensations that began to steal over him.

But as the blood rushed from his body into his head, the horrible sense of pressure on the overcharged brain became almost too great for endurance.

It was horrible as the pressure increased to hear the sound as of raging waters thundering in his ears.

Then his breathing became oppressed.

He writhed with agony.

"He feels it now," remarked Toro, in a tone of intense interest.

"Yes, yes," returned Hunston, whose eyes were fixed upon his victim's face. "Oh, how I wish I had his father and Harvey bound the same way; then would my revenge be complete."

Poor young Jack! His eyes, widely open, seemed to be starting from their sockets.

He gasped terribly for breath.

His face was purple.

The veins in his neck and forehead swollen almost to bursting.

The blood flowed from his nose and ears.

A stifled cry of agony burst from the tortured lips of young Jack Harkaway.

Soon all would be over.

Stay!

Hark!

Was it fancy?

Or did a shout at a short distance off answer the poor boy's cry.

Toro and Hunston seemed to think so.

For they started and looked suspiciously at one another.

Again the young sufferer shrieked wildly.

A quick and loud shout came sounding in reply through the wood.

"Hullo!"

This time there could be no doubt there was help at hand.

"Dat young Massa Jack's voice?" was shouted in familiar tones.

And the next moment, crashing through the undergrowth, his eyes glaring wildly with terrible excitement, the dark features of Monday came in sight.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE END OF THE SCENE.

He was dripping with wet, and his clothes were stained with blood.

But it was dear old Monday still, and not his ghost.

Monday alive and ready to do battle against any odds in defence of the boy he loved.

He saw at a glance the two murderers and then the deadly peril of his young master, and he cried, as he advanced, in a voice hoarse with horror and indignation—

"You big villains! you dam big cruel 'fernal villains!" But he did not attack them.

He rushed straight up to him who most needed his assistance.

"Massa Jack! dear Massa Jack!" he wailed, piteously, with tears in his eyes; "are you alive?"

"Ye-es," murmured the poor boy; "cut me down quickly."

"Dis minit," replied the delighted negro, as he dragged his knife from his pocket; "I save you dear boy."

The blade flashed in the air.

Another instant and our hero would have been released from his awful position, but ere this could be accomplished, the report of a revolver was heard.

Then a cry of mingled pain and despair.

And the brave negro fell backwards on the ground, pierced by a bullet from Hunston's weapon.

"The idea of that negro having the d—d impudence to be alive after the pummelling and the cold bath we gave him," remarked Hunston, coolly, as he restored his smoking revolver to its place in his belt.

"Nothing but lead will quiet these black beggars."

"He is quiet enough now," said Toro, giving the motionless body of the prostrate negro a contemptuous kick as he spoke.

"And so is Master Jack Harkaway," continued his comrade, as he approached the branch from which our hapless hero was suspended and contemplated his murderous work with satisfaction.

"Yes," assented Toro; "there's no doubt about that. His account's settled for this world. Our next victim shall be Jack Harkaway, his hated father."

Poor young Jack hung there perfectly still and motionless.

Not a limb stirred. Not a feature quivered.

The purple hue had died out from his face, and he had become pale as death itself.

"I'm quite satisfied," exclaimed Hunston, in a cold-blooded, deliberate tone, as he turned to depart.

"Shall I put a bullet in his heart before leaving?" inquired the brigand. "That would make certain that the boy will trouble us no more."

"No, that would spoil my revenge; his father must know he perished slowly. I will let Harkaway know the exact spot where he will find his dead son."

With these words the accomplices plunged into the thicket and disappeared.

Hardly were they out of sight, when the supposed lifeless body of our hero began to stir convulsively.

Suddenly he opened his eyes, and glared wildly around him.

Young Jack, in spite of the vindictive malice of his enemies, was not dead yet.

Providence had watched over him.

The blood he had lost, instead of hastening his end, had relieved the pressure from his brain and saved his life.

But he was in a terribly critical position.

And though conscious of his danger, he was too weak to rescue himself.

"Monday, help me," he murmured, in scarcely audible accents; "Mon—"

His voice ceased abruptly.

He had no power to finish the word.

Poor Monday.

He, alas! was unconscious.

What was to be done?

The helpless boy cast up his eyes despairingly, as if imploring Heaven to help him.

His eyes fastened on the branch over his head.

If he could only raise himself so as to grasp that, he might still be preserved, he thought.

He had no strength.

Suddenly, as if by a gleam of inspiration, a thought flashed across him.

The coil of string with the hook.

Might not that assist him?

Undoubtedly, if he only had the power to use it.

But, so far from that, he could not even get at it.

But the desire for life was strong within him.

As he pressed his arm against his side, he could feel the hook resting in his jacket pocket.

This inspired him, and he resolved to make an effort to draw it forth.

Cramped and pinioned as he was, he endeavored, by means of his left arm and hand, to coax that part of the jacket where the pocket was placed more over his breast.

In a few moments he was able to grasp the lappel of the coat with his right hand.

An instant more, and he had possessed himself of his coil of string and hook.

A thrill of joy passed through him as he grasped it.

But there was not much cause for exultation at present.

He had yet to fix the hook in the branch over his head. "I can never—never do it," he wailed, piteously.

But the thought of his desperate situation quickly aroused him.

"I must try," he murmured; "it is my only chance for life. Please, God, help me!"

Having uttered this simple prayer, he began to unwind the string to which the hook was attached.

Then, with a sudden jerk, he tried to swing the string over the branch from which he was suspended.

It fell short, and he had to commence the operation over again.

Again he made the attempt.

Again a failure.

A cry of disappointment burst from his lips.

He was growing dreadfully exhausted and faint.

His lips and throat were parched with thirst, and his old sensations were beginning to return.

The pressure on the brain, the strange sounds in his ears, and a strange bewilderment in his thoughts.

"I shall die, I shall die," he groaned, despairingly; "I have no hope."

"Have hope, Jack," a soft voice seemed to whisper in his ear, "courage—try again."

"I will, cried our hero, stimulated by the voice he fancied he had heard; "I will try once more; but if I fail this time it will be the last. I have no more strength."

By an intense effort of determination he once more set the string in motion.

"One, two, three," he cried, as, with one last remaining effort, he swung it up with all his strength.

The attempt was successful.

God had helped him.

With a bold curve, the cord flew clean over the branch, and twisted round it, the hook fastening itself in a projecting knot.

When our hero drew in the cord, and pulled against it, it was quite firm and tight.

The heart of the poor boy bounded with renewed hope at the success of his exertions.

"If I can only pull myself up," he thought.

And without waiting to indulge in further surmise, he began at once to make the attempt.

This he found the hardest work of all.

He dared not make any violent effort, for fear of breaking the cord, which was thin.

He was obliged to twist it round each hand in turn, to raise himself slowly, cautiously, inch by inch.

The cord cut into his flesh almost like a knife.

It was a struggle for life, and that nerved our brave young hero for endurance.

Gradually his body assumes a horizontal position.

He is approaching the branch slowly but surely.

One more effort, and he will be able to clutch it.

Again he breathed a short prayer, and once more he thought he heard a small voice say:

"Courage, courage, Jack. Keep on."

Again the cord is wound round his swollen hands.

Again he rises—gently, steadily.

The branch is within his reach.

And now—

Hal! what sound is that?

Snap.

The string has broken.

And the poor boy?

Is he—

No, no.

His hands clasp the bough.

He has strength enough to support himself a moment whilst he recovers his breath.

Then, by one more effort, he rolls himself over full length upon the branch where he lies, panting but rejoicing.

His object is accomplished.

The monster—death—is foiled of his prey.

For some time our hero lay with his eyes closed, but fervently breathing a prayer of thanks for his escape from the villain Hunston and the brigand Toro.

Whilst Jack is recovering himself, we will turn our attention to another of our characters, poor Monday, who was now stretched upon the ground, wounded and insensible.

Our readers will naturally be anxious to know how, after being at the bottom of the river, the faithful negro could ever have lived to be shot.

The mystery is, nevertheless, simple enough when explained.

When Monday was, by the iron hand of the giant Toro, knocked backwards into the creek, he was not drowned. The water, which would have speedily destroyed any ordinary individual, had a contrary effect upon our sable friend.

It only revived him, and brought him to his senses.

From his infancy he had been accustomed to live almost as much in the water as out of it.

When, therefore, he found the waters of the creek close over him, he was not alarmed, as most people who could not swim (and many who could) would have been.

On the contrary, he congratulated himself on his position, his reasoning being somewhat as follows:

"In de fuss place, being at de bottom of de creek; him out of de reach of Massa Hunston and Toro; dat one good ting.

"In de next place, if I don't come up again, dey tink me dead; dat anoder good ting. Let dem tink so.

"Den, when dey gone, I get out and follow de darned rattlesnakes—look arter Massa Jack. Dat de best ting ob all."

These arguments passed through the negro's brain in the twinkling of an eye, and determined him to keep where he was.

Although his arms were fettered, his legs were free.

With these he had sufficient power over the elastic element to keep himself beneath the surface, and at the same time to remove to a safer distance, whilst his experience as a diver enabled him to hold his breath until his enemies had departed.

Hardly had they turned their backs, ere a woolly head and a black face rose slowly out of the river, looked after

them, took a deep gulp of air into his mouth, and slowly disappeared again beneath the surface.

"De boy, de dear boy!" thought Monday, as the water closed over him.

The idea of his young master's danger gave him the strength of a giant.

With one sudden and mighty effort of his strong arms, he burst asunder the elastic ring that confined his arms.

Then, swift as an arrow from a bow, still, however, keeping beneath the surface, he darted toward the bank.

Three of his rapid strokes brought him there; and having reached the bank, he lay for a time quite still, to recover his breath, and allow his foes to get a good distance ahead.

His grazed shoulder bled profusely, for Toro's shot had taken effect, and his jacket was deluged with blood.

Anyone looking at him as he lay there would have certainly pronounced him dead.

But in a few moments more he was on his feet, and, though feeling rather faint and giddy from his exertions and the continued bleeding of his wound, following on the track of Hunston and Toro.

How he arrived at a most momentous crisis; what he said and did, and the fate he experienced, is already known to the reader.

Now he lay prostrate on the ground, the pulses of his faithful heart beating slowly, his strong limbs, feeble as those of an infant, bleeding, dying perhaps,

It was after a kind dreamy stupor had worn off, that our hero at length opened his eyes.

He felt stronger, and able to remember all that had occurred, but raging thirst devoured him.

He would have given the world, if he had had it, for the smallest drink of water.

The first object on which his eye rested was the hapless negro, lying on the grass in a pool of crimson gore.

"The wretches have murdered poor Monday," he exclaimed, with a cry of horror.

"No, dey ain't, Massa Jack, not jess yet," replied the wounded man, faintly, as he opened his eyes, and looked up dimly at the sound of the well-known voice.

"But you are bleeding," said Jack, pityingly.

"Yes, him tink him am," was the reply; "him catch de bullet in him ribs somewheres; but neber mind that. How you do yourself, Massa Jack?"

"I'm all right, if I could only untie my arms and feet," Jack replied.

"Tank God for dat!" fervently exclaimed Monday.

"Dis chile soon get you down."

The staunch Limbian made an effort to rise.

But the effort was in vain, and he sank down with a suppressed groan.

"It no good, Massa Jack; him got more dan him can carry dis time."

And with this faint attempt at a joke, he felt back again upon the greensward insensible.

Jack looked down upon his faithful friend, with intense commiseration.

It was the only thing he could do.

"Poor Monday will die from loss of blood," he murmured, anxiously, "and I fastened up here like this. If I could only—"

He broke off suddenly, as a faint chirp caught his ear.

It was the poor monkey, who was just beginning to have a dim sort of consciousness that he was alive.

Presently he sat up and looked round him.

Then he rubbed his head with his paw.

After which he shook it—probably to be sure his brains were still inside.

Having done this, he threw several somersaults and flips.

After which, having caught a flea, he seemed to be quite restored.

Our hero watched his coming to with much interest, and then he cried:

"Nero, old man, I am up here."

Nero looked up at the bough with a lively chirp, and grinned and nodded as though he was quite pleased to see his young master again.

"Come up, old fellow," continued Jack.

The monkey did not scamper away as he had done before, but instantly swung himself up to the branch on which our hero lay extended, and sat looking at him seriously.

"I'm in a fix, old boy," said Jack to his dumb companion, "and I want you to get me out of it."

As he spoke, he directed Nero's attention, as well as he could, to his bound arms.

The monkey seemed to understand him perfectly.

In an instant he was sitting astride his master, picking at the knots with all his might.

In less than a minute our hero felt the pressure removed from his arms.

Nero had untied the napkin, and was now flourishing it triumphantly in his paw.

Jack, having recovered the use of his hands, quickly took out his knife and severed the cords that bound his feet.

He was once more free.

"Now for poor Monday," he exclaimed, as he dropped from the branch.

His limbs were so stiff and cramped from the long-continued pressure they had undergone that he could scarcely support himself.

It was with difficulty he could even reach his wounded friend.

But having done so, he knelt down and raised his head in his arms.

"Monday, Monday, dear old fellow! speak to me," entreated young Jack.

The negro slowly opened his eyes.

"Him can't say noting, Massa Jack, now, but God bless you!" he gasped, faintly, and then closed his eyes again.

"What can I do for him?" thought our hero. "If I only had some water, or some rum."

Monday caught the word, and he murmured, almost audibly—

"Rum—lilly drop."

Alas! there was neither one nor the other, and Jack was almost fainting for a draught himself.

What was to be done?

They were some distance from home, our hero not in very good walking condition, Monday unable to walk at all, Nero—the only one who seemed quite himself—unable to take a message.

"Help must be got somehow," soliloquised Jack; "and yet, if I leave this poor fellow in this state, he'll bleed to death before I could get back, and that would be horrible."

As the only thing he could do, our hero endeavored to staunch the blood that oozed from Monday's side with the napkin.

But it was soaked through and through in a few moments.

"I must chance it and go for help," he exclaimed, desperately, as he rose to his feet. "Come on, Nero; we must be quick."

He took a few hasty steps, stopped, and returned.

"Shall I go or stay?" he asked himself, irresolutely, as he looked down at the unconscious form.

"If I go," he meditated, "it may save his life; if I stay, he's sure to die. My mind's made up; I'll go."

Our hero, having uttered these words, was about to depart, when, to his surprise, Monday checked him.

"Don't go, Massa Jack," he said, faintly; "him hear de sound ob footsteps coming."

Jack started at these words and looked anxiously around.

If his enemies should be returning!

But he neither saw nor heard anything.

"I think you are mistaken, old fellow," he said kindly.

"No, him not, Massa Jack," returned Monday, confidently; "him know de steps."

The black's acute ear, as he lay on the ground, had detected sounds at a distance, which to our hero's less practised sense were perfectly inaudible.

"You say you know the steps," asked Jack, anxiously; "whose are they?"

"Dey Sunday's steps," replied the negro.

"Sunday? Hurrah!" cried our hero; "hurrah! Go and meet him, Nero."

He pointed as he spoke, and away started the monkey.

Monday proved to be perfectly right.

In less than two minutes the voice of the American was heard shouting:

"Whar you two got to, eh? No good hiding out ob de way; dis chile sure to find you, yah, yah!"

A few moments more, and Sunday, with Nero hopping along at his side, came in sight.

Young Jack uttered a cry of joy, and rushed forward to meet him.

"Well, Massa Jack, how de big spree getting on, eh?" asked Sunday, with a broad grin on his black face, as they reached each other.

"Big spree?"

"Him mean de big spree you and Monday going to hab togeder. Am it ober yet?"

But the cheerful expression rapidly died out of his face as our hero replied, seriously:

"Yes; the 'big spree,' as you call it, is all over, and, unless you move yourself quickly, it's very likely you'll be just in time to come in at the death."

"Death, massa," almost gasped Sunday. "Who going to die?"

"Come and see," replied young Jack, as he began to retrace his steps.

Sunday followed.

A very few yards brought them to where the wounded Monday was lying.

"There!" said our hero, as he pointed to him.

"What—brudder Monday!" exclaimed the American, in remorseful accents, as he looked down upon his disabled comrade.

The latter opened his eyes, and looked up at him feebly.

It was too much for Sunday.

He burst at once into a flood of penitential tears, and fell on his knees by his side.

"Forgib me, mis'able sinner dat I am," he howled, lamentably; "forgib me for locking yah up in the coal cellar; him didn't mean to do it, s'elp him golly, him didn't."

"I forgib yah," murmured Monday. "Hab yah got lilly drop ob rum?"

"Him got quart bottle full in de basket," returned Sunday.

The next moment the bottle was out and the mouth applied to the lips of the wounded man, who sucked at it greedily.

It seemed to agree with him very well.

"Have you any water in that basket?" asked our hero presently.

"Lots, Massa Jack, replied Sunday, as he drew forth a stone jar.

Our hero pounced upon it like a young tiger, and drank till he could drink no longer.

We need not prolong this memorable scene.

Young Jack, with Sunday supporting our old friend Monday, reached the hotel late that night.

Monday was at once put to bed, and his wounds attended to.

There was no sleep for John Harkaway, senior that night when he heard the hair-breadth escape of his boy from the two villains, Hunston and Toro.

CHAPTER XV.

THE day—the happy day—was fixed.

Mr. Mole would fain have crept off to church on the extreme quiet.

But Harvey would not hear of this.

"No, no, Mr. Mole," he said, "you have done a noble action; you have shown yourself superior to all worldly weaknesses, and we are not going to sneak along now as if we were doing something to be ashamed of. You will soon have your third wife, and that alone shows you have great courage."

"Of course," replied Mr. Mole.
 "And we are proud of you."
 "Are you?"
 "Yes, I think it is a noble action; one to be proud of."
 "Is it?"
 "Undoubtedly, Mr. Mole," added Harvey, with a look full of admiration at the tutor. "I regard you as reverent folks must have regarded the martyrs who sacrificed themselves at the stake for their principles."
 Mr. Mole winced again.
 "You sacrifice yourself," concluded Dick.
 "Don't, Harvey, don't."
 "I won't, if you wish it, but it's true."
 "You mean well and kindly, I know," said Mr. Mole.
 "I do," returned Dick.
 "Of course, but you have precious uncomfortable ways of expressing yourself at times."
 "Dear me, I'm very sorry to hear that. But you must get ready to meet the bride. Here's your new coat."
 "New coat!"
 "Yes, I ordered one for you, for I supposed that you wouldn't care to be troubled by all these little details at such a time."
 When Mr. Mole caught sight of the garment, his whole belief in Dick Harvey's seriousness was shattered.
 "A bright blue coat with gilt buttons, and a green velvet collar!" he said; "it's a mistake."
 "No," returned Harvey, "for here's the coat of yours I sent as the pattern garment, instead of bothering you to get measured."
 "Do you want to make a laughing stock of me, Harvey?" exclaimed Mr. Mole.
 "This is the latest fashion," replied Harvey.
 "Why, it was getting old when I was a boy," said Mole; "the people would take me for some antiquated old fool."
 "Sir!"
 "A second edition of Rip Van Winkle, who had been boxed up asleep for twenty years, while the world was going on."
 "Are you aware, Mr. Mole," said Harvey, in his most impressive manner, "that this was the fashion that the heir to the throne of Great Britain led at the last royal marriage in England?"
 "Nonsense!"
 "It is true."
 Mr. Mole was silenced, and consented.
 The wedding favors were something to remember, being of such abnormal proportions that they suggested reminiscences of the pantomime. Indeed they would have done credit to Dyk Wynkyn, if devised for the nuptial ceremony of King Uglinug the Oneth, or some such imaginary monarch.
 All Dick's eloquence was, however, thrown away when he endeavored to persuade Mr. Mole to cut off the trouser which covered his wooden leg, and festoon the leg itself with white satin ribbons.
 Harkaway went to the wedding with Harvey in one carriage.
 In the next carriage followed the two gentlemen of color, the Prince of Limbi, alias Monday, and Caesar Hannibal Augustus Constantine Jex, alias Sunday.
 Now, perhaps of the whole party, it was Sunday who appeared to be the gayest.
 Indeed, he seemed to have some special and secret reasons for mirth, for he could with difficulty, repress a sort of incipient chuckle the whole morning through, and in his efforts to drown the cackinnations, he nearly swallowed one of his Berlin gloves.
 The size being thirteens, this would have occasioned him some inconvenience.
 Following the two gentlemen of color was another carriage—last, not least.
 In this vehicle sat young Jack and Nero.
 He had purposely taken the last carriage, in order that they might not see him bring Nero out. Nero was in gorgeous array.
 Young Jack had had a white satin waistcoat made for him on the sly, and a light blue coat, and a new cocked hat.
 And what with his wedding favor, and a bouquet as large as a tea-tray, Nero was a very prominent feature in the procession.
 Let us hope that no young ladies will read this chapter, or we fear that we shall get severely handled by the fair critics.
 We have actually sketched roughly the appearance of the bridegroom and the wedding guests, even to Nero himself, and not a word has been said of the bride.
 The blushing bride!
 What would you say to learn that she looked the best of the party?
 Her wedding toilet had been the especial care of Emily and Hilda, and everything she wore was simple, elegant, and in good taste.
 There was the orthodox lace veil, which completely hid her dusky face from view; and as her figure was good, many people who saw her envied Mr. Mole his bride.
 Well, they might do worse, for under her black skin there beat one of the warmest and most generous of hearts.
 The ceremony went off very satisfactorily, in spite of the presence of some high-spirited colored persons of tender years, who raised a laugh by their antics at a most impressive moment during the service.
 Monday was very fond of children, and he had a number of infantile pensioners, who joined the wedding party in church without receiving any special invite.
 One of these was a boy of ten years of age, who was a most diverting young imp.
 His name was Pompey Ball.

Master Pompey had two intimates with him of his own stamp; Julius Smith and his brother Pete, stat nine; besides a little bright-faced negress named Prissy.
 Now this juvenile party appeared to be greatly diverted by the sight of the bridegroom's timber toe, and their mirth took such a noisy form that Sunday had to be told off to keep them in order.

Imitation is the highest flattery, it has been said.
 Surely, then, the wedding party must have felt highly flattered in this instance, when little Pompey Ball performed in a comic manner the nuptial ceremony for Pete and little Prissy.

Pompey's mimicry of the clergyman was perfect and little Pete stood on one leg, holding a stick (to resemble Mr. Mole's wooden leg) with one hand, while he gave the other to Prissy, who looked as demure as a bride should.
 Sunday was mightily tickled, but he pretended not to observe it until Julius, who could not restrain his laughter, burst into a loud guffaw that startled the whole party.

"How dare you, you imperent critters!" said Sunday, suddenly appearing to be outraged: "take dat."
 And he floored Master Julius with a slap on the head. And this abruptly ended the little negro's funny mimicry of Mr. Mole's nuptials.

Soon after Mr. Mole with his friends left the church, with his third black wife lovingly at his side, looking down with a smile of admiration at his wooden leg, young Jack having, unknown to Mr. Mole, turned up his trousers, and brought to view the wooden leg, bound round with white satin ribbons.

The party had not got far on their journey home before young Jack shouted:

"Lockout, Nero is after you."

The next moment the monkey came dashing full tilt at Mr. Mole.

Mr. Mole, hearing the shouts, turned round as quickly as any man could who had a wooden leg on one side of his body and a dusky bride on the other.

Nero was close upon him, and evidently mistook Mr. Mole's sudden turn for a hostile movement.

So, being unable to stop himself, the artful animal suddenly darted between the bridegroom's real leg and his wooden substitute, intending by this method to get behind his enemy.

But Nero rose too suddenly, and the consequence was that Mr. Mole was thrown off his balance and on his back.

"Murder!" screamed the professor; "take the savage brute away. It is trying to steal my wooden leg."

"You had better get up and fight, Mr. Mole," said young Jack, "or Nero will run away with Mrs. Mole."

But Nero, however, was busy.

The gay ribbon with which Mr. Mole's timber prop had been decorated caught the animal's attention, and he resolved to secure it as a trophy of victory.

Nero's fingers or claws quickly untied the knot, and then, with a shrill squeal of triumph, he danced round his fallen foe, waving the bit of silk in the air, and finishing by hugging the bride as though he meant kissing her.

Some of the others, who were getting rather anxious about the matter of refreshments, deemed it time to interfere, so Mr. Mole was at once set up on his feet.

Nero would not part with the ribbon, which he fastened round his own leg, and, thus decorated, followed the bridal procession.

And when they were safe home, there was the wedding breakfast and the speeches, which was the occasion for Mr. Mole to distinguish himself, which he did.

On this one occasion, however, Mr. Mole was comparatively moderate in his cups, and when the rest were at the height of their merriment he quietly withdrew with his bride.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DUEL—MR. MOLE TO THE RESCUE.

BETWEEN the darkies Sunday and Monday there really existed a very strong feeling of affection, but which, however, they had their own peculiar manner of exhibiting.

Their attachment partook somewhat of the cat and dog quality.

Like those interesting domestic animals they were sometimes all fun and frolic one with the other.

At others they might be seen snapping and snarling, as though they were going to bite off each other's noses.

One morning they had got into one of their arguments. But this time it was neither one of nationality nor of politics.

It was entirely a personal matter.

The question started being:

Which of the two had rendered the most signal service on the eventful day when the "big spree" came off in the wood?

Monday declared "he had all to nuffin."

Sunday protested that "what he did licked Monday holler."

It seemed likely to prove a stiffish subject.

Our hero came up almost at the commencement of the discussion.

"Ah, here Massa Jack," cried Monday "he settle de matter off hand."

"Ob course he will," exclaimed Sunday; "won't you, Massa Jack?"

"Certainly I will," Jack replied; "what is it?"

"We want to know who war the bess man on de day we had big fight in de wood," exclaimed Monday.

"I war," cried Sunday.

"No, I war," insisted Monday; "war'n't I, Massa Jack?"

"You were both the best," answered our hero, with a laugh.

"No, dat not right, Massa Jack," returned Monday, shaking his head profoundly; "can't both be bess; one must be better dan de oder."

"Ob course," exclaimed Sunday, triumphantly, sticking out his chest; "dat me; I'm de one. 'Merican nigger lick all do oder niggers in creation into fts."

"No, you jess wrong; you de oder."

"Boo!"

"Yah!"

At this point of the argument the two disputants craned their necks till their noses touched, and made horrible grimaces at each other.

"What you mean let dose men catch hold and nearly kill Massa Jack, eh?" demanded Sunday at length.

"Dat your fault altogether, you black tief!" answered Monday.

"It dam lie, it yours, sar."

"How you make dat out, sar?"

"You ought to have looked arter him."

"Stop a minit, dar; didn't you lock dis child up in de coal cellar? Answer dat."

"Well, what if him did?"

"Why, how de debbil could him look arter Massa Jack same time him locked up in de coal cellar, you big pump?"

Monday chuckled intensely as he put this perplexing question.

His opponent, not being prepared with an answer, did not attempt any. He only growled:

"De coal cellar de bess place for ugly black nigger like you; if you stop dere you'd not been shot."

"If this child bin 'longside Massa Jack, he not been tied up by de heels," retorted Monday.

"Bah! you no good! What you done when you lie on your back with your big mouth open, if I no gib you de rum, eh?"

"Him done widout, you ugly nigger."

"How you get out ob the wood if this child not carry you home on him back?"

"Him stop where him was, of course," replied Monday.

"And kick de bucket," sneered Sunday.

"Him kick you in a minit, if you talk like dat," exclaimed Monday, irritably.

"Kick me, you ugly black pudd'n?"

"Yes, kick you, you imperent tief!"

"What you mean call dis child imperent tief, eh, sar?"

"What you mean, call me ugly black pudd'n, eh, sar?"

"Bah!"

"Boo!"

Once more the irritated negroes grinned in each other's faces.

Young Jack came between them.

"You're a long time settling this matter," he said.

"Dat dam nigger dere insult me, Massa Jack," exclaimed Monday vehemently, as he pointed to his comrade.

"So he did," assented our hero; "I'm a witness."

"Dat dam nigger dere insult me too," cried Sunday, with equal intensity, pointing in his turn.

"No doubt of it," admitted the young referee, "I'm a witness to that also. You have both grossly insulted each other."

At this consoling piece of information the disputants ground their teeth and growled at each other.

"There's only one thing to be done to make things straight," continued our hero in a magisterial manner.

"War dat, Massa Jack?" asked his sable listeners, eagerly.

"You must have satisfaction," said Jack seriously.

"Dat's it; hab sat'misfacshun," echoed the niggers.

"Call each other out."

"Dat de sort; call each oder out."

"Fight a duell!"

"Golly! dat proper! Fight um doo-el," exclaimed the enthusiastic opponents.

"With pistols."

"Wid pistols."

"Gorra, yes, loaded."

"To the muzzle!"

"Of course; to de muzzle."

"With powder and bullets."

"Dat de sort, powder and lots of bullets."

"Then, when you've blown each other to bits, you'll be satisfied, said our hero rather solemnly.

"Perfec'y, Massa Jack," replied Sunday.

"Yes, Massa Jack, when we hab blown each other to bits we shall be satisfied," cried Monday. "But whar de poppers to come from?"

"And de powder and de bullets?" joined in Sunday.

"I'll provide everything," replied Jack. "In an hour's time all will be ready. Meet me on this spot."

With these words they parted.

The two antagonists exulting in the joyful anticipation of annihilating each other.

Young Jack rejoicing in the prospect of the fun he was going to have.

Our hero commenced his preparations by borrowing, (without asking, by-the-by,) a splendid pair of his dad's six-barrelled revolvers.

Together with a powder-flask, and a bag in which to hold the bullets and a box of caps.

He then procured a couple of bullock's bladders, into each of which he put a handful of peas to make them rattle well, and a quantity of flour—to add to the general effect in the event of their bursting.

These he inflated, and having tied them on to the ends of two sticks, he gave them a coating of black lead.

Next he mixed some dough, and made a quantity of bullets out of this material, which he baked on the hob, giving each one a rub with the black lead to give it a natural appearance.

His warlike preparations being complete, his active mind suggested a plan by which his worthy tutor, Mr. Mole, should participate in the coming entertainment.

He accordingly sat down and wrote as follows:

"Wednesday, 11 o'clock a. m.

"DEAR MR. MOLE,—I write in a terrible state of alarm to tell you that Sunday and Monday have had a dreadful quarrel, and are going to fight a duel. I have tried all I could to stop them, but they won't be stopped. They are both like savage tigers thirsting for each other's blood! As soon as you have read this, run (Jack, knowing how good Mr. Mole was on his wooden pin, chuckled intensely as he wrote this) as fast as you can to Crackshaw's Field, where you will find them firing away at one another. Your influence alone can stop this dreadful affair of blood.

"Yours in great anxiety,

"To ISAAC MOLE, Esq."

Having sealed the note and left directions that it should be given to Mr. Mole when he came in from his morning's walk, our hero went to look for the belligerent niggers.

He found them all ready. Polished up and dressed in their best. Their ebony faces glistened with delight at the peppering they fondly hoped they were going to give each other.

Forgetting that they were very likely to be peppered themselves at the same time.

As soon as their young master appeared they rushed to him.

"Am you got de poppers, Massa Jack?" they asked, eagerly.

"Certainly," replied our hero; "and a splendid pair they are, too. Look!"

As he spoke, he opened the leather case that contained them, and revealed them to Sunday and Monday.

The eyes of the darkies glistened.

Their mouths fairly watered at the sight.

"Dey am beauties! Dere no mistake 'bout dem," they exclaimed with intense admiration.

"Yes," said Jack and there's no mistake about the way in which they do their work either."

"Dey got six barrels apiece, too," chuckled Monday; "dat capital!"

"Rather," grinned Jack; "by the time you've fired a few rounds at one another, you'll both be as full of holes as the top of a pepper box."

Sunday and Monday did not seem quite as rapturous as they might have been at the idea of this wholesale system of ventilation.

They scratched their woolly heads, looked first at their young master, who was whistling "Pop Goes the Weasel" very unconcernedly, and then at each other.

"Oh, golly!" thought Sunday, "if old Monday kill dis child, him not hab any more rum."

Monday was also in deep thought.

He was thinking, if Sunday shot him, he might make love to his wife Ada, and our old friend Monday did not relish the idea.

In fact, the thought was beginning to dawn upon them that they had been a little rash.

Perhaps Monday recollected the one bullet he had had extracted from his body.

If one bullet was so painful, what would a dozen or two be?

Monday did not feel happy.

But there was no time for reflection.

"It's time to start," cried Jack.

And away they went, but walked very slowly.

* * * * *

Sunday and Monday recovered their spirits during the journey.

They had snarled at each other all the way as they went, and by the time they arrived at the scene of operations, they had almost reached their former state of ferocious enthusiasm.

Every unpleasant allusion to the "tops of pepper boxes" was forgotten, and they were only anxious to commence proceedings.

"We quite ready, Massa Jack," they said to our hero.

"I'm not," replied the latter; "before you can use the revolvers effectually, it is necessary that they should be loaded; and understand, gentlemen, they must be loaded with bullets."

"Certainly, Massa Jack," admitted the duellists.

Jack did not hurry himself over this operation. He wished to lose as much time as possible, in order to give his respected tutor time to arrive just in the middle of the fun.

Consequently, he performed his task deliberately, the two anxious combatants watching him all the while with much interest.

"Dere go de powder," soliloquised Monday, as Jack poured the proper quantity of the combative material into each barrel. "One, two, three, four, five, six; dat jess de number."

"Dere go de crushing caps," Monday continued, meaning percuting caps.

"Am all de leaden pills in?" murmured Sunday, as he watched his young master produce the bag containing the dough bullets.

"How many of these would you like in each?" asked Jack, as he shook a handful out of the bag.

The duellists reflected a moment.

They seemed very undecided on this point.

Jack came to their assistance.

"You can have any number you like," he said, suggestively; "one, two, or three; only say."

"How many you tink, Massa Jack?" asked Monday at length.

"Nay, it's for you to decide upon that," Jack replied with a smile.

"How many you hab yourself if you war gwine to jine in this noble fight?" inquired Sunday of his young master.

"That all depends where you let me have them. I should say three in the head would be enough," said young Jack?

"Tree in your head, eh, Massa Jack?" echoed Monday, in a reflective tone. "Tree in each barrel, you mean, eh?"

"Of course. Will that number suit you?"

"What you tink, ole double smut?" Monday asked of his opponent. "Tree be enough in each barrel?"

"Him tink three quite enough," growled the latter in reply.

"Him tink so himself," muttered Monday.

"Then yon settle upon three?" asked Jack.

"Yes."

Our hero had now to perform a little feat of legerdemain.

He carefully counted out the fictitious bullets in threes, and pretended to place them in the barrels; but, instead of doing so, he slipped them into his palm.

The lookers-on, however, did not detect this.

After the ramming-down was completed, Jack looked anxious across the field, hoping to catch a glimpse of the energetic Mole hurrying down to the scene of slaughter.

No signs, however, of the preceptor appearing, he approached the combatants.

"Here are your weapons," he said, as he placed the revolvers in their hands.

"Tank you, Massa Jack."

"Berry much 'bliged, Massa Jack," they exclaimed, each shutting one eye, and trying to squint down the barrels.

But our hero had stuffed a piece of paper in the ends, and they could see nothing.

"Gorra!" murmured the darkies, "dey loaded right bang slap up to de muzzle."

"That's a fact," returned Jack, with a cheerful laugh.

"Don't look down the barrels, please," he added, in a tone of precaution; "if one happened to go off, the consequences might be serious; one charge is enough to blow your head off."

"Golly, yes, um tink so," exclaimed the sable, altering the positions of their weapons in double quick time.

"Well, now, I think we're all ready," said our hero.

"You'd better take your places."

"Whar we go to, Massa Jack?" they asked.

"I'll show you," answered the latter, as he placed them back; "but first I must ask you if you have considered where you would each like to be buried."

"No, Massa Jack, we hab not."

"That is very forgetful on your part," said Jack. "But have you ordered coffins for yourselves?"

"Coffins, sar?" cried Monday and Sunday, in a breath.

"We don't want no coffins; we only want to fight like gentlemen."

"Very well. Now you'll walk away from each other as many paces as you like, and then stop," said our hero. Away walked the darkies rapidly.

From the eagerness of their manner, and the tremendous strides they took, it seemed as though they were determined to get as far as they could from each other.

Young Jack stood shaking with laughter at seeing the niggers getting so far from each other.

At length, as they kept walking and walking on without evincing the least intention of coming to a halt, he bawled:

"Hollo! how many miles are you going before you stop?"

"Um didn't know we got to stop," they bawled back.

"Oh! yes, you ought to have stopped long ago. Come back."

They returned, and stood back to back, as before.

"Now start again. Count six paces, and then stop."

They took a timid glance at each other's pistols, and off they went.

"One, two, tree, seben, nine, six," they counted.

Perhaps it was excitement made them a little erratic in their numeration.

"Stop! That will do very well," remarked Jack, scarcely able to control his mirth.

"Golly, massa," murmured Sunday, as he glanced over his shoulder at his opponent, who seemed to him unpleasantly near, "de distance berry short."

"Short! exclaimed our hero; "that's the proper distance. What's the use of firing at each other a mile off? There's no fun in it at all."

"But dis rader too near, Massa Jack, don't you think so?" continued Sunday.

"Specially as de poppers got three dozen bullets in each barrel," urged Monday.

"Only three, you donkey, not threes dozen," corrected Jack; "but there," he added, "if you're afraid, you can take two steps more, but not another inch."

"Dis child not 'fraid," returned Monday, indignantly.

But they both availed themselves of their young master's permission, and took two more strides, good long ones, too.

Now, then, are you ready?" cried Jack.

"Iss, massa."

"Listen to me, then," continued our hero, in an authoritative tone.

"Iss, Massa Jack."

"You will please remember your weapons have six barrels."

"Iss, Massa Jack."

"Each of which contains three bullets."

"Iss, Massa Jack," was the somewhat shaky reply.

"Consequently," our hero went on, "you will have six shots, and discharge eighteen bullets in the first round."

"When we begin to pop?" asked Sunday, nervously.

"When I give the signal, you must take steady aim at each other's heads," Jack replied; "and I want you to be very particular about that."

"Iss, Massa Jack," responded the tyros.

"What am de signal?"

"The signal I shall give you," said our hero, very emphatically, "will be 'Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole.' Can you recollect that?"

"Certainly um can," replied the darkies, in considerable perturbation of ideas. "'Knock down Massa Mole.'"

"No, no," laughed Jack. "'Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole.'"

"Ah, iss. 'Knock 'em bote down, Massa Mole,'" repeated the belligerents.

That's it," returned our hero, "don't forget that. Whenever you hear me say these words, fire away as hard as you can till I cry 'stop!'"

There was a dead silence for a moment.

"Attention, ready!" said Jack.

"All—right—Massa Jack," stammered the bloodthirsty duellists.

Another slight pause, and then—the signal.

"Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole," shouted our hero.

Both the combatants shut their eyes simultaneously.

Up went their two arms in the air with the revolvers at the end of them.

Both pulled the triggers.

But there was no report.

"Hollo, hollo!" cried Jack, "what's the meaning of that?"

"Um tink dere someting de matter wid de poppers," said the combatants, opening their eyes in astonishment.

"Let me see," said our hero, rather impatiently, as he stepped forward. "Why, you've neither of you cocked your weapons," he exclaimed.

"No more 'em hab," admitted the duellists.

"Don't forget that again if you please," enjoined Jack, rather sternly; "it's important."

"No, massa, um sure not to forget," they replied, as they pulled back the hammers of the revolvers.

"Now, then, once more—ready! Knock 'em both down, Mr. Mole," shouted our hero, for the second time.

The same process was repeated as before.

The duellists shut their eyes, raised their revolvers, and then pulled the triggers.

This time they went off.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

"Golly, dey beginning to go now anyhow," muttered the combatants, as they fired right up in the air.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang!

At the two last reports our hero, who was prepared, let fly a handful of the dough bullets he had made at the heads of the duellists.

The miniature dumplings came with a sharp, stinging sensation against their foreheads.

The effect was electric.

"Oh, gorry musay, him brains blowed out!" yelled Sunday, as his legs gave way under him and he rolled on the grass.

"Dat nigger got no brains to blow out," laughed Monday.

Jack, feeling inclined to burst with laughter, walked forward, and picking up the revolvers, began coolly to reload them.

During this operation the wounded heroes ceased their lamentations, and sitting upon the grass, contemplated one another rather curiously.

They had certainly felt the bullets strike them.

Yet there was no blood to be seen, and the momentary sting had passed away.

"How you feel, broder smut?" asked Monday at length of his comrade.

"Him don't feel much de wns, ole son," Sunday answered. "How you feel yourself?"

"Him feel jess de same as you feel," Monday replied.

"Rather faint, eh?" said Jack, cheerfully, as he came up to them. "That's nothing, considering you've got a couple of bullets in each of your skulls."

"Golly, massa Jack!" they gasped, putting up their hands together and instituting a vigorous search on their frontal regions.

"Um don't feel no holes," remarked Monday, at length.

"No, the bullets have stopped them up," replied our hero. "You're all right for another round. Here, catch hold of your shooters."

The combative pair looked rather dismayed as Jack thrust the weapons into their hands, but they were ashamed to decline them.

"Now then," cried our hero; "time! Up with you, and remember, when I give the signal again, don't shut your eyes, and fire at each other instead of in the air."

The combatants again took their places.

Jack was about to give his signal.

Suddenly a voice was heard shouting in the distance: "Stop the duel; stop it—it is murder. I forbid it."

It was Mr. Mole, who was scudding along with all sails set towards the scene of action, his hat stuck on the back of his head, and his coat tails flying behind him.

"Stop, stop!" he cried, as he came waddling up to the spot, puffing and blowing like an asthmatic old goose.

"I can't allow murder to be done; it's against the law," he gasped, as he rushed between the combatants.

"Put down your deadly weapons, you benighted savages," he continued, excitedly.

"Um shan't do nothing ob de sort, Massa Mole," returned Monday.

"You won't?" shrieked Mole.

"No, um won't, um see yah blowed fuss. Get out ob the way, and let us go on wid de shooting."

But the noble-minded Isaac would not get out of the way.

"I see that nothing but strong moral influence will do here," he muttered to himself.

Then addressing himself once more to the refractory niggers, he continued:

"My poor misguided friends hear me. Listen, you smutty-faced vil—no, I mean my dearly-beloved brethren, I insist on your putting an end to this unnatural strife."

"If you don't stand out ob de way, Massa Mole, um put an end to yo, s'elp um golly, um will," growled Sunday.

"Pray retire, Mr. Mole," pleaded Jack, in a tone of intense anxiety; "don't endanger yourself."

"No, my dear pupil," returned the pious Isaac, firmly, "never will I shrink from my duty. No; they may kill me, but I will not stand by and see murder done."

"But consider your precious life," entreated our hero, with tears of irrepressible mirth in his eyes; "do, pray consider your precious life; consider your young and lovely wife."

But the noble-minded man, with Spartan firmness, refused to consider anything.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, you two," cried Jack to the negroes, in an assumed tone of strong indignation, but feeling, at the same time inclined to burst with laughter; "if I was Mr. Mole, I'd let you know who I was."

"So I will," exclaimed that heroic individual, as he drew off his coat, and proceeded to tuck up his sleeves; "I'll let 'em know who I am."

"That's right," cried Jack, encouragingly, as he shook a handful of the dough bullets out of the bag into his palm.

And then he shouted enthusiastically:

"Knock 'em down, Mr. Mole."

"Dat de signal," muttered the darkies, who began instantly to fire away.

Bang, bang, went the revolvers in the most lively manner possible.

Whizz went a shower of small dumplings from Jack's hand in the face of the bewildered Mole, who, fully believing he was shot, clapped his hands over his eyes, roaring with all his might:

"Oh, murder, murder!"
Jack, to add to the fun of the fight, fired a pistol close to Mr. Mole's ear, and just at the same moment the monkey started forward.

Bang, bang.
"I'm being assassinated!" yelled Mole, falling.
Bang, bang.
"Murder!"
Bang, bang, and another shower of dough from Jack. Down went Mr. Mole to the ground.

"I'm a murdered man, I'm a corpse. What will Mrs. Mole do without her Mole?" he groaned.

"She do berry well," shouted Sunday.
Jack rushed up eagerly to his preceptor.

"Are you hurt much, sir?" he asked.
"Hurt much?" wailed the unhappy sufferer. "I'm mortally wounded; about twenty shots in my head. Can't you see that?"

"Oh, dear, where—in your head?" inquired our hero, in a tone of well-assumed horror.

"I don't know," gasped Mr. Mole; "everywhere. Oh, oh! my life-blood's ebbing away rapidly; I feel it is; send for the doctor."

Mr. Mole was carried by the two negroes to a little distance, and placed with his back against a tree, moaning piteously.

"I don't see any blood, sir," said Jack, presently.
"I'm bleeding inwardly," gurgled the tutor, in a hollow tone; "my end is fast approaching."

"It will be a great comfort to you, sir, to reflect that you died in the cause of duty," remarked our hero, soothingly.

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this consoling suggestion.

"I don't see it in that light at all," he replied, dolefully; "I've no wish to die just at present, and—and I have only been married to my third wife a few days."

He stopped suddenly, and pulled Jack down close to him.

"Have the goodness to put your hand into the right pocket of my coat tail," he whispered to him faintly; "you'll find a—a—"

"Wound, sir?"

"No; a small flask of rum. I think a little will revive me."

The flask was speedily produced, and placed to Mr. Mole's lips.

While he was drinking, a fresh outbreak took place. Sunday and Monday, having exhausted all their ammunition, and not being able to fire at each other any more, had opened the bag in which our hero had secreted the bladders and sticks.

These they had brought forth, and were banging one another about the head and face to their heart's content.

"Do you see that, Mr. mole?" cried Jack, with pretended indignation.

"Look at those fellows."

The tutor looked.

"Unfeeling wretches," he murmured. "Still engaged in a sanguinary conflict; at this awful moment, too."

"Yes, sir," Jack replied.

"What are they fighting with?" demanded Mr. Mole, who was considerably mystified by the peculiarity of the weapons and the strange rattling noise they made.

"Two war clubs, of the wild tribe of the copper-colored Crackskulls," explained our hero, very seriously.

"Never heard of them," muttered the preceptor, as he took a pull at his rum flask.

"There'll be more murder done, I'm afraid," continued Jack, apprehensively, as the bladders and the peas rattled away on the heads and noses of the combatants.

"Couldn't you use your influence, sir, to stop that dreadful fight?" he asked, in a tone of earnest entreaty. "It would be a noble act for your last."

The expiring Mole turned up his eyes, and the rum bottle at the same time to his lips, and emptied it.

Then he replied, magnanimously:

"Yes, it would be a noble act; an act worthy of a man and a brother. I will do it. Be kind enough to help me up."

Jack set him on his legs, which the rum had made rather unsteady, and the large-hearted Mr. Mole set off in a very zigzag fashion towards the combatants.

"Dark-skinned sons of the—hic—tropics," he exclaimed, solemnly, as he reached them, "forbear! Isaac Mole stands before you."

The tropical individuals took no notice whatever of the grand appeal, being far too deeply engrossed in their interesting amusement.

Bang, rattling, went the bladders on the heads of the players.

Mr. Mole began to feel his great soul stirred within him.

"Desist, sanguinary monsters, I—hic—command ye!" he continued, energetically.

Still not the slightest attention was paid to Mole.

Bang, rattle—rattle, bang, responded the bladders on heads of Sunday and Monday.

At length Mole's patience was exhausted, and taking a good aim, he rushed in between them.

"Block-headed pigs!" he shouted; "lay down your weapons! in the name of the great American Republic, I order you to—"

Bang, rattle, on Mr. Mole's head.

"Wretches!"

Rattle, bang, on Mr. Mole's nose.

"Scoundrels! Ruffians!"

Bang, rattle—rattle, bang, fell the bladders like hailstones on Mr. Mole's head, nose, ears, and every part of the upper region of his anatomy. Loudly he yelled:

"I shall be murdered! Oh, my poor wife, what will she do without me?" (Rattle, bang.) "Help!" (Bang, rattle.) "Police!" (Rattle, bang.) "Jack, assist me, for" (bang, rattle) "for mercy's sake! Oh, my poor" (rattle, bang) "head!" (Bang, rattle.) "My skull's" (rattle, bang) "fractured!"

At this juncture, and as a grand wind-up to the whole, both the bladders went off with a tremendous pop.

Down went Mr. Mole again upon his mother earth, smothered in flour and deluged with a shower of peas,

looking like the ghost of a departed clown, and firmly impressed with the idea that his brains had been knocked out by the war clubs of the copper-colored Crackskulls.

Jack, almost in convulsions of laughter, which he was obliged to control the best way he could, rushed to assist his respected tutor.

It was some time before he could convince him that he was not mortally wounded.

But having at length succeeded in impressing him with this conviction, Mole was hoisted once more on to his legs.

Sunday and Monday had already shaken hands, and made up their quarrel; and at our hero's suggestion, they apologised very humbly to the discomfited Mole.

This soothed his ruffled feelings considerably, and finding another flask of rum in the left pocket of his tail coat, he speedily grew very hilarious, insisting upon riding home on Monday's shoulders, singing as he went, in a somewhat inebriate and disreputable manner:

"For we are jolly good—hic—fellows,
And so say all of us."

The niggers and young Jack joined in chorus, and all went well until Monday, getting a little excited, stumbled over his comrade's foot, and pitched the jovial Mole off his perch head first into a ditch.

The ditch was half full of water, but the worthy tutor was dragged out by his boots before he had swallowed a couple of quarts.

But it stopped his singing for that day, and when he reached the hotel, he was glad to sneak in by the back way, and up stairs to his room as quietly as possible.

Having reached this, he went at once to bed, ordered hot water bottles to his feet, and drank rum and water till further notice, to neutralize the effect of his immersion in the ditch.

Young Jack detailed the whole affair to his father, who could not help laughing heartily at the recital, although, at the same time, he shook his head reprovingly at his mischief-loving offspring.

"Never mind, dad," was the excuse he received; "I only do as you did when you were a boy."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE Bowery gang had not yet got clear from the detectives.

Toro and Hunston were still prowling about disguised, watching the movements of Harkaway and Harvey, and waiting to see the result of what they thought young Jack's cruel death.

The "Independence," the ship they intended sailing off in, had not yet weighed anchor.

They were waiting for one more hand to make up the crew.

This hand was not a professional sailor.

There was, however, a weighty reason for waiting for this hand.

Several of the crew who had influence with Clemmans, the captain of the ship, had persuaded him to wait for this passenger.

It was altogether a strangely-mixed crew that served on board the "Independence," and Captain Clemmans cared not for testimonials of honesty and good conduct; he only wanted their credentials to speak for their daring and bravery.

The missing man that they were waiting for answered thoroughly well all these requirements.

The influential members of the crew were Hunston and Toro, and their worthy companions from the den in the Bowery.

The man that they were waiting for was Robert Emmerson.

Delays, however, were dangerous.

They little thought how great that danger was.

There was, however, a certain clannish bond between those lawless men; and, although they would one and all have felt infinitely easier in their minds out at sea, they could not endure the idea of weighing anchor while Protean Bob was absent.

Could they have known anything about him it would have sufficed.

But, as it was, they only knew that Robert Emmerson had slunk out of their den one night, bound upon a foraging expedition in their service, and that he had not returned.

They thought it very likely that he had come to grief in their service.

They had the greatest confidence in Protean Bob's powers, but this long-continued silence thoroughly alarmed all of them.

So Hunston and Toro resolved to go ashore disguised in search of him.

They knew thoroughly well the haunts he used.

At any rate, they thought they would be likely to learn some news of their daring and adventurous comrade.

With this purpose they came ashore separately, and made by different routes for a meeting place agreed upon beforehand.

This meeting place was a low drinking bar, frequented by some of the roughest characters.

While here they got into a dispute with a queer, hulking-looking fellow, who was apparently a freshly-landed emigrant in search of employment, and so hot grew the discussion that it looked as though they were coming to blows.

The fellow had got a precious ugly look, and, although he said little, they were on their guard against accidents when they saw him put his hand behind him, as though he were about to whip out a bowie or a six-shooter.

Whether it was that cantankerous fellow was not pleased with the chance of an encounter with a man of Toro's build, or whether it was that he did not like the idea of tackling two of them, we cannot say.

Certain it is that he slunk out of the bar without a word.

"He's an evil-eyed cuss," remarked a stranger casually.

"That he is."

"More brag than breeches," remarked another. Just then back came the quarrelsome emigrant, and, stooping, he picked up a paper at Hunston's feet.

"You dropped this," he said.

And once more he vanished.

Hunston turned the paper over and over in his hand.

"I don't think I did," he said.

And then he was about to throw it away, when a scrap of writing on it caught his eye.

This was the scrap:

"It is imprudent to lose your temper in a bar. Keep down your bile till you reach the corner of Canal Street, where a friend may accost you."

Hunston changed color.

What could it mean?

He consulted with Toro about it.

"The writer of that letter knows us," said Toro once.

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure."

"It certainly looks like it," said Hunston, thoughtfully.

"It is as sure as we are here," said Toro; "how can you doubt it for an instant?"

"Who do you think it comes from, then?" asked the other. "Friend or foe?"

"Friend, most likely," replied the giant, after a moment's consideration.

"Why a friend?"

"Foe can only point to Pike and Nabbit."

"Granted."

"They would never write so as to put us upon our guard," remarked Toro.

"True."

Talking it over in this way, they wandered out of the drinking bar and on through the streets, until they came to Canal Street.

The part at this precise moment was quite deserted.

But not for long.

They had, in fact, been scarcely five minutes there when the seedy-looking loafer from whom they had received the letter came up.

They eyed him suspiciously at first, and both kept their hands in their pockets, holding tightly by the deadly weapons they carried, ready for any emergency.

The manner of this seedy personage was, however, very different now from what it had been at the drinking bar.

There it had been cringing and insolent by turns.

Here it was neither one nor the other. A quick glance about him on all sides satisfied him apparently that they were unobserved.

Then, in a low but animated voice, he said:

"Hunston—Toro! What, forgotten! and so soon?"

The man's manner startled them considerably.

"Who are you?"

"Can't you guess?" he replied, with a laugh.

"What are you fooling for?" exclaimed the Italian, impatiently. "Why beat about the bush so?"

The stranger laughed at this outburst.

It needed little to raise the ire of the fierce Italian, as you know, and in an instant he had whipped out his revolver and presented it at the mysterious one's head, with a loud imprecation.

"Speak!"

Hunston knocked up his hand contemptuously.

"Don't be a fool, Toro. What good can that do?"

"What indeed?" added the stranger, laughing still in the most provoking manner.

"Speak, then!"

"No threats."

"We don't wish to threaten you," said Hunston.

"Indeed. But it looks remarkably like it."

"Take no notice of that, then, but say who you are?"

"I will not."

Out came Toro's pistol again.

"Judge for yourselves," continued the stranger, removing his hat.

And then, in an instant, to their intense surprise, they recognized Robert Emmerson—so aptly named Protean Bob.

Yes, there was no mistaking his identity now.

But how changed he was.

How pale—how wan and haggard he had become in those few days.

And small wonder.

He had been skulking about, afraid to show himself in daylight in spite of his aptitude in disguising himself, so fatally hot had the pursuit of him become.

Perpetually worried and harassed, he had grown to be afraid of his own shadow.

In every street he met the officers of the law upon the hunt; in every house where he had been known, and where he could have obtained assistance, he found suspicious-looking men hanging about on the watch.

Matters, indeed, had reached such an alarming pitch with him that he was fearful of buying food with the money he had plundered from the murdered Garcia, and thus, with a small fortune upon his person, he had actually felt the pangs of hunger.

Saul Garcia, the murdered Jew, was already partly avenged.

Aye, and Garcia's friend Sol, the Jew, and the murdered London detective, Nabley's brother, all slain by Emmerson, were yet to be bitterly avenged.

"Emmerson!"

"Bob!"

Such were their exclamations on recognizing their infamous associate.

"Hush!"

"What now?"

"Don't bawl my name about so," said Emmerson, looking around nervously.

"There's no danger."

"More danger than you know of."

"Stuff!" said Hunston, impatiently; "you're growing timorous in your old age, Emmerson. There's no one near here to listen anything we may have to say."

"I can't be too careful," said Emmerson; "the police are as plentiful after me now as stones in the street. Day and night I am hunted after, and can find no rest anywhere. My life, I tell you, is a misery to me. I

wish," he added, with a despairing look, "I wish I was dead and buried."

His comrades in villany looked at each other in mute surprise.

They could not believe that Robert Emmerson was afflicted by anything like remorse.

Still less could they regard him as a man who was scared by fear to such a miserable state of irritation and nervousness.

Yet such was the case.

The wretched man, his hands yet reeking with murder, had spoken his real sentiments, without a word of exaggeration, in saying that he wished himself dead and buried.

His life was indeed a misery to him now.

There was no rest for him in mind or body.

Emmerson was a haunted man.

By day he skulked and hid away in mortal dread of being seen; by night he dreamt, when he had the good fortune to sleep, and dreamt horribly of how the old Jew fought for his life. His visions were always the same.

Eternally he was back with his struggling victim, enacting that horrible death fight, going through every part of that hideous tragedy, in which every detail was presented before his fevered brain with a vividness and reality that were appalling.

Was not Saul Garcia, then, already avenged on his murderer.

"How did you get away?" he asked presently.

"By digging upwards," was Hunston's reply.

Upwards!

"Yes."

"How?"

They explained then what they had done, and went into their adventures generally with The Bowery gang.

"In the house above," said Hunston, "we came across Captain Clemmans—"

"Was he living there?"

"Yes."

"Confound it! If I had only known that, what a deal of trouble I might have saved."

"Well, the skipper is a decent sort of fellow."

"A bold man," said Toro, which was the highest praise that he could award any one.

"He is that."

"Yes," said Hunston, "and we are only waiting to get off—so you can guess the result."

"I can."

"We man his ship."

"And did you all get clean off?"

"Yes, through the secret way Clemmans took us."

"Where are the others?"

"On board."

"When do you start?"

"As soon as our crew is complete; we are only waiting for one man."

"And he is—"

"Robert Emmerson," replied Hunston.

They shook hands warmly over this.

The wretched fugitive felt a relief at hearing this which is beyond description. He had been depressed, overwhelmed with a sense of utter loneliness, ever since that dread night of murder.

Cruised upon his desert island had felt happy and cheerful in comparison with Emmerson, who prowled about in the midst of crowds and yet alone.

And so far had this sense of desolation crept over him, that the revulsion of feeling gave him a great desire to shed tears.

CHAPTER XVIII.

BURIED ALIVE.

SINCE the fearful attack made on young Jack in the woods by Hunston and Toro, he had received strict instructions from his father never again to venture out of the town or leave the hotel without a protector.

Jack's courage would have taken him anywhere, but he would not disobey orders, so he prevailed on Dick Harvey one evening to take a stroll with him and Nero.

Dick Harvey, wishing for a walk, at once consented.

"Well, Jack, if you promise to be good and not run away, I will go with you."

"All right, sir, off we go. Come, Nero, old boy, you shall have a run with us."

"Stop," said Harvey; "here comes your father; ask his permission before we start."

"What are you up to, eh, Jack?" asked Harkaway.

"I wish to have a stroll, dad, and Mr. Harvey says he will come with me, if you will permit me to go."

"Very well, Jack," replied his father, "I know you will be safe with my old friend Dick; so off with you."

Emmerson was all eagerness to proceed on board at once.

They walked in single file through the town toward the spot where they were to take the water and go on board.

As they were walking along, they came across a sight that surprised them.

A youth was strutting arm-in-arm with a big monkey dressed up in gorgeous array, and close by their side walked a gentleman.

"Keep back!" suddenly cried Hunston. "See there! Do you recognize the boy?"

"Can it be the young cub we thought we had done for in the wood?" replied the giant, starting with surprise.

"It is Harkaway's son, young Jack Harkaway, by all that's evil," whispered Hunston.

"Then he must have escaped our vengeance. Why did you not let me, when he was hanging, put a bullet in him?" growled Toro. "And look; there is his infernal monkey. Do you remember him?"

Hunston had more reason to recollect Nero than his companion, for he had suffered severely from his claws upon the occasion of their last meeting.

"Curse Harkaway!" exclaimed Hunston, turning to Emmerson; "he's the author of all our troubles."

"All. I remember his visit to our gaming house."

"May he die miserably," said Toro.

"I wish we could make him," said Hunston, with his old vicious chuckle. "But he and his crew seem to lead a charmed life."

Hunston might well say so, for he had tried all that villany could devise, and audacity carry out, to put an end to his old and redoubtable foes. But Jack Harkaway had been too much for him.

He was a ticklish customer, was Jack.

Meantime, the latter's son walked on, all unconscious of danger, by the side of Harvey, and Nero swaggered as much, or more, than his master.

A hurried conversation took place between the three villains, and then their consultation speedily assumed shape.

A terrible shape too, alas! for young Jack.

"Who will attack the man?" asked Emmerson.

"I will," cried Toro. "Wait till we get him with no one near, and this shall settle him for a time."

And Toro pulled from his coat pocket a large life preserver.

"See," whispered Hunston, "they've turned down that dark lane; now's your time."

Toro the giant was some distance from Harvey, but he swung round his head the life preserver, and then it went flying through the air straight at Harvey's head.

With a deep groan Dick fell to the ground, but rising on his arm, he cried:

"Fly, Jack, my boy, we are attacked."

The next moment Toro was upon him, and with one heavy blow of his fist Harvey fell like a dead man.

Hunston stole after the boy, carrying his cape in his hand.

And, just as young Jack was about to turn round, the cape was thrown over his head, and he was held in a vice-like embrace.

Nero bolted.

The sudden assault startled the monkey at first, and he squeaked most discordantly.

In fact, such a precious row did he kick up that they began to be afraid that attention might be attracted by it, and therefore a hurried attempt was made to secure Master Nero.

But the latter was not to be caught.

"What shall we do with this fellow?" asked Toro.

"Let him remain where he is," said Hunston, brutally kicking poor, helpless Harvey. "Now let us away."

Young Jack was hurried along for some distance, and then dragged into an empty, half-finished dwelling.

Not till then was the cape removed.

The prisoner glanced around him nervously.

The place was certainly familiar to him.

This was little to be wondered at, very little, for in this very room young Jack had before been in a sorry predicament.

It is needless to recall to the reader's mind that terrible affray in the street in which poor Isaac Mole came to grief, and wherein the unhappy Harry Girdwood was done to death by that butcher Toro.

Now they had Jack once more alone!

No fear of interruption this time.

Their purpose was then to complete what they had begun before.

What this purpose was would have puzzled a looker-on at this stage of the proceedings, for Toro began operations by pulling away the brickwork by the half-finished chimney.

Young Jack saw all.

Prayers, tears, remonstrances, the boy knew well would avail him little with these men.

He was as brave as a young lion, too, and humble pie was a species of diet he was little used to.

"Ready for him now?" asked Hunston.

"Yes."

"Put him inside, then, Emmerson, and don't fail in having your revenge this time."

"I wish his accursed father was here, too," said Toro.

"That's a lie," retorted young Jack, quickly.

"Silence!"

"You know it is a lie!" added the fearless boy. "If my father were here, you'd be all shaking in your shoes with fright."

Toro made a savage slap at the speaker, which young Jack dodged nimbly.

"If your father was here, he'd be treated the same as you," said Hunston; "he's a cur, and he'll suffer yet."

"You know that is idle lying," said young Jack; "you've felt the wait of his arm often enough."

"Hold your noise," thundered Hunston furiously.

"It is true."

"You lie!"

"I don't! You know you have begged your life when you had no right whatever to expect mercy, and he has granted it; and you know how you have turned upon him always, and repaid him by more treachery."

"I'll cut your tongue out."

"You tried that on with my father," said young Jack, "and it did not succeed."

"But we are alone here, and I do not see why I should not at once kill you," said Hunston, pulling out his long, thin dagger.

"He may escape again like he has from the hanging business," said Toro; "therefore, I say let the boy be killed. It will make sure."

"O, you are bold fellows, I know," said the boy, with a sneer. "I escaped from the woods, and something tells me I shall again escape."

"Silence!" roared Hunston.

"You'll not escape," said Toro, "for you'll never see mortal face again. So, you young vermin, death is near you. Tremble!"

"Don't know how," retorted young Jack; "it's an item in the education of the Harkaways which has been totally neglected."

In the tussle of wits young Jack was clearly their master.

They waited no longer, but seized him and dragged him to the chimney to thrust him in.

Young Jack offered no resistance whatever.

It would have been useless, as he well knew.

Once there, in that narrow aperture, one of them held a pistol at his head, while Toro set actively to work with trowel and mortar and bricks.

And now it became apparent what fiend-like villany they contemplated.

Bricking him up!

Consigning the young and hapless boy to a living tomb!

And, in all this, what caused them the greatest disappointment was to find their victim fearless and undaunted as ever.

They knew well that he realized the full danger of his position, for his sharp tongue told of keen wit.

Yet, whatever he felt, he kept it well to himself.

They knew how dreadfully he had suffered when tied up by the heels in the wood, and they counted this time upon tears, and cries, and prayers for mercy.

Imagine, therefore, how great was their disappointment.

And still the bricking-up continued.

The wall which was closing up before young Jack was two bricks deep, and of a solidity which would certainly defy his efforts to free himself.

Young Jack kept a calm exterior, but he felt a sickening dread creeping over him.

Brick by brick his doom was being consummated.

A death far too horrible to contemplate.

But he did not mean to let them see his fear in his face.

He was keeping his eyes open for any chance which might offer, and presently he thought that he saw one.

Hunston was standing close by the aperture, and out from his breast pocket the hilt of a knife appeared, just within reach.

Young Jack was at it in a jiffy.

He reached it, too, and in the selfsame effort made a stab at Hunston, which had very nearly taken effect.

But Emmerson knocked up his hand sharply.

Down fell the knife with a clatter upon the floor, and young Jack received a cruel slap in the face, which sent him reeling back, bleeding at the mouth and nostrils.

At the same instant Nero made his appearance at the door, but suddenly disappeared as Toro threw a brick at him, shouting:

"There's that brutal monkey again."

The monkey bounded away grinning.

But Nero was soon back, and pouncing upon Hunston's knife, he darted across the room.

And then followed an exciting chase, all in favor of the monkey, who was here, there, and everywhere in a trice.

"We had better shoot him, I think," said Toro.

"No, no."

"Why not?"

"The noise would alarm the neighborhood."

"True."

"The best idea would be to brick him up with the brat."

"True, true," cried the other two in a breath.

"They will enjoy it all the more," said Hunston, "and perhaps they will gnaw each other when the pangs of hunger grow rather more pressing than pleasant."

"I should like to watch the accursed brat's face then," said Toro, in fiendlike glee.

"So should I."

"But, happily, we shall be far away from New York, upon the ocean, I hope, by then. Now for the monkey."

They spread out, and drove Nero into a corner.

But Nero was not to be caught so easily.

Just as they thought they had hold of him, he sprang up and bobbed past them.

Then, with a bound, he flew to the chimney and joined his unfortunate young master.

As the last brick was being placed, Hunston called through the small aperture to young Jack:

"Will you beg for mercy?"

"No."

"Will you sue to us for forgiveness?"

"No."

"Once more, for the last time, will you beg for your life?"

"Never. You thought you had destroyed me in the woods, but I am here. I do not fear you, and will not beg of you my life."

"Quite right, boy; you would not have got it."

"Finish," said Toro, impatiently; "he is bragging as much as he did in the woods."

The last brick was placed.

The deed was done.

And thus was young Jack Harkaway consigned living to the grave.

CHAPTER XIX.

MR. MOLE AS A STUMP ORATOR.

MR. MOLE and his bride took the first train for Boston, and thence proceeded to Harkaway's plantation, where he was to spend a brief honeymoon with his dusky bride.

In attendance upon the "young couple" were the brace of blackbirds, Messieurs Sunday and Monday.

They had both been duly coached up by Dick Harvey before starting, and they had made up their minds for fun with the newly-married pair—with the new bridegroom especially.

As soon as they arrived at the plantation a grand general assembly of the colored population was called by Sunday and Monday.

The meeting was settled to take place in a large barn, and Monday was of the opinion that it would be better for it to take the character of a farewell lecture.

Accordingly a temporary platform was raised.

A table or desk was placed upon it and duly provided with the orthodox water bottle, glass, and hand-bell.

The hand-bell was to invite silence when the lecturer should be ready.

Mrs. Mole was seated in front, close by the lecturer's desk, and by the way in which she exchanged nods and glances with Sunday, it looked as if they were on strangely familiar terms.

Presently there was a general hush; then a burst of applause which rang through the barn.

Mr. Mole stumped gracefully on to the platform.

"Bravo, Massa Mole!" shouted the niggers and negroes, lustily. "Bravo, sar!"

Mr. Mole bowed his acknowledgements.

Then he turned to Sunday, who had followed him on to the platform.

Sunday had evidently some official duties to perform here, for he began by ringing the bell to call for silence.

Then he cleared his voice with rather more ostentation than was precisely necessary.

"Ladies an' gemmen, an' specially gals ob de colored persuasion, he began, with an elegant wave of the hand.

"Bravo, Sunday!" screamed the audience.

Mr. Mole looked rather indignant.

Was he to lecture, or was Sunday.

That was the question he had to ask himself.

Sunday bowed gracefully and continued:

"I hab de extinguished honor ob introducing my brudder Mole."

"Drop the brother," said Mr. Mole, audibly.

"I repeat, ladies an' gemmen, ob introducing my brudder Mole," continued Sunday; "an' ladies an' gemmen, it's twice de pleasure to introduce a man an' a brudder when he is such a brudder."

"What are you driving at, Sunday?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, growing impatient. "I wish you would be a little less familiar in your manner."

"What for, Massa Mole?"

"What for, you ignorant nigger?"

"Yes, Massa Mole."

"Because I don't care to be bothered all over the place by you. It's all very well to call a black pudding like you a man and a brother; it's all very well, I say, in a speech, or in a sentimental song, or in a book. It's a sort of sentimental figure of speech, you understand, that's invented in some tract; for, of course, a black doll—a male Aunt Sally like you, can't very well be a brother of mine."

"Oh, I can't!"

"Of course not."

"Sure?"

"Don't talk stuff."

"Come here, Chloe," said Sunday.

"Sunday," said Mr. Mole, "I beg you won't."

"Won't what?"

"Won't be quite so familiar with Mrs. Mole. Remember, please, her name is Mrs. Mole."

"Yes, sar; Chloe Mole."

"Mrs. Mole," said the tutor, severely. "And whether Mhoe Chole—I mean Molly Chole—that is, Chloe Mole or not, little concerns you."

Sunday scratched his wool, and winked again at Monday.

There was evidently something up between them.

"Well, brudder Mole, I will if yer likes; but, by golly! won't it sound rum to hear me call my sister Mrs. Mole?"

Mr. Mole made a very wry face at this speech.

"What do you mean, you ignorant bit of coal, by your sister?"

"She is my sister, brudder Mole," returned Sunday.

"Don't make a greater ass of yourself than is necessary, Sunday."

"It's a fact," persisted the darkey.

"What is?"

"Dat Chloe am my sister."

"Bah!"

"Ask her."

"If you try on your unseemly jokes with me, Sunday, I shall certainly complain to Mr. Harvey."

"You can 'plain to Old Nick himself if you like, brudder Mole; but Chloe Lisbef Jex dat was, Chloe Lisbef Mole dat is, am dis chile's sister."

Sunday leant over the handrail, and appealed to Mrs. Mole.

"Is dat so, Chloe?"

"Course it is, Caesar Hannibal," replied Mrs. Mole.

Sunday turned triumphantly to Mole.

"You hear, sar?"

"Yes, yes," replied the bewildered Mole; "but I don't understand."

"You don't appear to understand nuffin', brudder Mole," said Sunday, with a faint dash of contempt in his tone. "If Chloe Lisbef Jex and Caesar Hannibal Augustus Constantine Jex was brudder and sister, ob course you and me is brudder and brudder."

The argument had grown public by this.

As it grew more animated, they spoke in a louder voice, and so that the audience could hear all that was said.

"Bravo, Sunday!" said one of the foremost niggers.

The applause was taken up, and Sunday had to bow gracefully his acknowledgements of their approval.

Mr. Mole winced.

A dreadful feeling was creeping over him.

He felt convinced that he had been done, yet he could not accept the belief all at once.

"My good friend Sunday speaks in a poetical sense," he said, with a bland smile.

"No, I don't," cried Sunday, "I don't know nuffin' about poetry."

"Poetry."

"I says poetry. What I mean, sar, is dat you're my brudder, cos Chloe and me had the same mother and sar father."

"Ha!"

Mr. Mole was staggered.

There was no resisting this any further.

"The same father and mother!" groaned Mr. Mole.

"Why didn't you say so before?"

It was a sad blow to him, for he had reviled Sunday, and heaped all kinds of moral dirt upon that darkey's devoted head before everybody, and now he discovered that he was his brother by marriage.

It was really too bad.

However, this was not all he was to suffer.

The brace of dusky wags had something in store for him.

They had not forgotten nor forgiven him for painting them up as he had done.

"He made us white," said Monday to his colleague, "Well make him black. Dat's de way we'll take de larf out ob him."

Sunday went on with his introduction of the lecturer.

"My brudder Mole," he said, "am a pussion ob high 'stinction, and don't play second fiddle to no living cuss as an orytor. He've only took to lecturing since he lost his leg. Perhaps you'll say, ladies and gentlemen ob color, dat it's quite natural dat, under de circumstances, he should 'go on de stump.' Dere ain't nuffin' to larf at, you niggers. My brudder Mole, I say, am a pussion ob high 'stinction. He's got a good deal more in his head dan you can get out. What are you larfing at, you niggers? He hain't got so much wool on his cokernut as some of us?" he went on, as if replying to a remark of one of the audience. "Maybe he ain't, but it's not what he's got on his head, gemmen; it's what he's got in it."

And as Sunday spoke, he thumped the table to emphasize his speech, and in thumping, he jerked Mr. Mole's hat off on the ground.

Monday picked it up, and as he did so, he tipped the wink to his colleague, and they both grinned.

It almost looked as if there was some mischief in the wind.

Monday made a great show of brushing Mr. Mole's hat inside as well as out.

Now, if you had looked a little closer, it would have appeared as though Monday were rubbing just the inside of the hat, just the rim of the lining which rests upon the forehead, with some powdered burnt cork.

Moreover, he dropped some of the finely-powdered cork into Mr. Mole's colored silk handkerchief which was in the hat.

This done, he hastened to restore the hat to Mr. Mole.

Sunday had, by this time, finished his address, and made way for Mr. Mole, who stumped forward, and gave a preliminary cough.

The allusion to his growing baldness had not been thrown away.

He did not care to appear to notice it, but by degrees he fiddled at his hat and fidgeted about until he got it on to his head.

"Ahem?" began Mr. Mole. "Ladies and gentlemen—"

"Bravo, brudder Mole!" from Sunday.

"I have much pleasure in meeting you all here to-night, although I must confess that I could wish the cause had been different. We are going away—"

"Oh—h—h," yelled Sunday, suddenly grief-stricken, and the whole of the audience caught it up, howling away at a deafening rate.

"Hush! my good friends," said Mr. Mole, with difficulty making himself heard. "It is not as if I were going to die—"

"Dye what sar?" asked Monday; "not your whiskers?"

"Dear me!" cried Mole, quite perplexed. "No!"

"What den sar? Can't be your wool; der ain't 'nuff to dye by no manner ob means."

Mr. Mole sighed.

They seemed to be playing at cross purposes.

"When I say die, my friends," he said, "I don't mean to paint or change the color of my hair or beard—far from it. I simply mean dissolution—the word of the same sound, but of a different orthography—"

"Don't know nuffin' 'bout jography," said Sunday.

"In other words," continued Mr. Mole, not heeding the interruption, "I meant, as Shakespeare says, 'the shuffling off this mortal coil—'"

"Dat's me!" cried Sunday, with a laugh. "Oho, Massa Mole says he means shufflin'!"

"Hooray!" yelled the colored audience.

"Now, you darkies," cried Sunday, "we all know dat Massa Mole is a heavenly dancer."

"He am dat!" cried Monday, "regular beautiful."

"So, gents all, likewise gals," said Sunday, gravely, "what'll you have? Quick step, Lancashire breakdown, or hornpipe? Don't all speak at once."

"Dear me, dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "I mean—"

"Fandango, bolero, cachuca?" cried Sunday. "Now, den, black folks, choose, for brudder Mole wants to be—"

"De 'Essence ob ole Virginny,'" cried one of the ladies.

The rest approved of this, for they kicked up a rare row.

Now "The Essence of Old Virginia" was a breakdown which was danced by aged niggers, whose legs had lost their youthful elasticity.

Mr. Mole knew this, and he had a double reason for resisting the suggestion.

Firstly, he did not mean dancing at all.

Secondly, he did not approve of this allusion to the summer of his own life having so completely departed.

"Dear, dear me," he exclaimed, in sheer despair, "if I am not allowed to speak, I shall leave the platform."

He would have carried his threat into effect had not Sunday been there to have stopped him.

Neither he nor Monday meant to let the worthy tutor off so easily.

They managed to obtain silence, and Sunday proceeded to offer some explanation.

"Massa Mole don't mean to dance now," he said; "he've changed his mind."

The audience groaned.

"No, no!" cried Mr. Mole, "that's not it. I never spoke of dancing."

"Oh, yes," corrected Sunday, with a serious and reproachful look, "you said shuffling most distinctual."

"He did, he did!"

"But I didn't mean double shuffling," cried Mr. Mole, in despair.

"Oh—h—h!" ejaculated Sunday. "Massa Mole mean to say dat he's only a ornary shuffler."

Expressions of anger were manifested at this explanation.

Mr. Mole gave it up for a bad job.

He turned to the water-bottle for consolation, and filled a tumbler.

You would never have forgotten the wry face that he made as the water trickled down his throat.

"Sunday!"

"What's the matter, sar?"

"You've forgotten to put the gin in," he said, in a whisper of the greatest disgust.

"Neber mind the gin. Speak to 'em; dey're getting in a debbil of a temper. Say summat to smooth 'em down like."

"What shall I say?"

"Tell 'em dat black and white is all one—dat we're all brudders and sisters, and sich; dem's de sentiments what'll fetch 'em."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mr. Mole, "to resume. I came only to deliver a short farewell address to you. I do not like the idea of leaving, even though it be but on a journey, without bidding you good-bye."

"Hear, hear!"

"Thank you. For are you not as dear to me as any white people? Of course, are we not all men and women, with hearts alike—all brothers?"

"An' some sisters," added Monday, in an audible voice, which made the audience laugh.

"Dat's right, brudder Mole," said Sunday, sotto voce; "you's gwine it. Pile it in stiff."

Mr. Mole could not but see that the pair of darkeys were having some fun with him, and so he made a wily dash at retaliation.

"Black and white are all one to me," he went on to say; "our good friends here will tell you that I have ever regarded them as my equals. The difference of color I looked upon as of little consequence. Yet they will tell you I have done my best to make them as white as I am myself."

Sunday and Monday exchanged looks at this.

"They will tell you," said Mr. Mole, encouraged by the laughter and cheers of his auditors, "that I painted them white to try and demonstrate practically that we were all alike."

"Haw! haw! haw!" laughed the colored people generally.

"An' Massa Mole, findin' dat wom't answer," said Monday, suddenly getting on his legs, "is going to paint hisself black; so, anyhow he'll make hisself our equal."

They cheered at this.

"I can't exactly promise that," said Mr. Mole, superciliously; "but I may paint them white again on some future occasion."

As he spoke he took off his hat to wipe his forehead, and there, sure enough, was a coronet of black dye.

And then, when he wiped his forehead, he smeared it all over his face.

Three or four dabs of his handkerchief, and he was a regular sweep.

The powdered cork did its work well.

"Ladies an' gemmen," said Sunday, on his legs at once, "Massa Mole promised to paint hisself, which he denies it like; but don't b'lieve him, he's gwine to do it all de while."

"Haw, haw!"

"In fact, you might almost say as he's doin' it."

"Haw, haw!"

And all the while Mr. Mole, smiling and bowing gracefully, and alternately wiping his face with his begrimed handkerchief, was utterly ignorant of any further cause for merriment than his own waggish allusions to the practical joke he had played upon the darkeys.

How the lecture would have ended there is no saying, had not an alarming incident occurred.

A telegram was brought in to Mr. Mole.

It was from New York, and sent by Jack Harkaway the elder.

"To ISAAC MOLE, Beddington Farm."

"From JACK HARKAWAY, Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York."

"My Jack has disappeared. Is he with you? If not, we fear the worst. Pray return immediately. We are in the deepest distress. My old friend Harvey has also disappeared."

"Read that, Monday," said Mr. Mole seriously, "and then pack up."

"To go?"

"Yes."

"What's de matter, brudder Mole?" asked Sunday.

A loud wail from Monday answered his query.

"Oh! my Jack, my Jack," he cried; "dem dam willins hev got him ag'in. Oh! my poor child, why did dis miserable old nigger come away and leave you? Willin, and traitor, and thief, dat I is."

They were all back again in New York by the first train.

CHAPTER XX.

JACK HARKAWAY senior was at the railway station to meet them as they alighted from the train.

He shook them all eagerly by the hand.

"He's not with you?" he demanded in a broken voice. Mr. Mole shook his head.

"Then," said Harkaway, falling upon Monday's shoulders, the last hope is gone."

And the big-hearted, bold-hearted Harkaway gave himself up to his bitter grief. The last, last hope was gone.

He now feared for his young Jack and his dear friend Harvey's life.

"Forgive my weakness," said Harkaway presently; "I have to keep such a bold front at home, that the effort has overstrained me. If his mother saw me give way, she would die."

"When did he disappear?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Within an hour of your start," was the reply. "He went with Harvey."

"What have you done in the matter?"

"Everything."
 "Police?"
 "Yes."
 "Offered rewards?"
 "Yes."
 "Do you suspect anybody in particular?"
 "Nobody but our old enemies. It must be the work of Hunston and his gang."
 "We must all put our heads together," continued Harkaway, "and try what we can think of to recover my Jack, and my old friend Harvey. If they're alive, we'll find them."
 "We will, for my love is with them both," said Mole.
 Mole did what he could to cheer up the poor bereaved father.
 But in vain.
 He was not to be comforted.
 "You must keep up a good face, my friends," Harkaway said, "before my wife and the ladies generally. It is no use alarming them."
 "True!"
 "Meanwhile, my dear old friend, I think you had better not see Emily or Hilda to-night."
 "Why?"
 "Because they have been so building upon young Jack and Harvey being with you, that I cannot find it in my heart to undeceive them to-night, at least."
 "Very good."
 "Take heart," said the faithful Monday, who was ready to blubber. "Take heart, massa; we will find Jack. He is so dear to all of us."
 "If my stumping through New York," said Mr. Mole, "until I have worn my timber toe down to the size of a cotton reel, will do it, I will find our dear Jack."
 "Heaven bless you," rejoined the heart-broken Harkaway.
 "Cheer up, cheer up," returned poor old Mole, swallowing his tears, and wabbling his nose, for it tingled with grief. "I shall find my boy Jack yet."
 "How?"
 "That's more than I can say at present."
 They little knew the great danger of young Jack, or that Dick Harvey was at that moment stricken down near to death.

CHAPTER XXI.

It is now high time that we return to young Jack! Poor Jack!
 So soon after his escape from the woods to be again threatened with a cruel death.
 Buried alive!
 Bricked up in a chimney by his implacable foes, the three ruffians, Hunston, Toro, and Emmerson.
 This surely was the end of all.
 Hope seldom dies in the human breast, it has been said, yet it was well-nigh extinct in young Jack's.
 The faithful Nero evidently understood that there was danger, for he nestled closer and closer, to his master.
 "Good Nero, brave Nero," said young Jack, returning his caresses, "you are a true friend. You saved me when near death in the forest tree, and may once more do me a service."
 The monkey whined and whinnied, and nestled closer and closer yet to young Jack.
 And as they cuddled up together thus, young Jack caught a glimpse of daylight overhead.
 He looked eagerly up.
 Yes, there it was, sure enough.
 The chimney shaft was nearly straight, so that, small as was the aperture at the top, it let in a good-sized ray of sunlight.
 "If I could only reach that," thought young Jack, "I could escape."
 And then hope began to revive.
 But it was soon over.
 He soon discovered that it was hopeless to attempt such a feat of climbing.
 "It is more than Nero could accomplish," said young Jack.
 But even as he spoke, he made up his mind to let Nero try it.
 He sent him up a little way, and Nero, it was clear, could mount to the top.
 And as young Jack watched him, he had a lucky notion.
 "Nero, old boy," he said, "come down."
 The monkey understood as well as any Christian could have done, and he did more than many Christians do—he obeyed.

"Now, Nero," said young Jack, "I am going to trust you on a very serious mission. I want you to take a letter for me to dad, or to some one at the hotel. Do you hear?"
 Nero whined.
 He understood, and this was his response.
 Young Jack carried a pocket-book, so he took it out, and by dint of a great deal of perseverance and guess-work, for it was dark, he contrived to scribble the following note to his father:

"To Mr. JOHN HARKAWAY,
 "Fifth Avenue Hotel.

"With my earnest prayers to anybody finding this note to forward it immediately to him.

"MY OWN DEAR FATHER: I am in the toils. Hunston and his villainous companions have caught me and caged me. I fear Mr. Harvey is killed. I am in the empty house from whence Mr. Jefferson once rescued me, buried alive, bricked up in the chimney on the first floor. May Heaven preserve my life until you can come to rescue me.
 "Your unhappy boy,
 "JACK."

The next thing was to secure this note about Nero's body.

He carried a small pincushion—the gift of little Emily—in his waistcoat pocket, and this being amply furnished, it came in just handily.

He pinned the letter to Nero's jacket, and then, with many a pat of encouragement, he started him up the chimney again.

And as Nero climbed, something fell from his pocket, and clattered upon the ground by young Jack's feet.

It was a knife.

A long, slender-bladed knife Mr. Nero had spied in the pocket of the villain Hunston, and boned.

And now it was likely to prove of service to Jack.

He picked it up, and then watched Nero's progress in breathless interest.

It was not easy climbing.

But Nero was equal to the task, and he went up at a great rate.

Once at the top, he squeezed through, and then, squatting beside the chimney pot, he leant over and rammed his head in again to take a farewell look at his young master.

It quite shut out that little ray of light for the moment.

"I'm glad that there is that much light," said young Jack to himself; "it would look horribly like the grave if that little bit of light were shut out."

Poor boy! he little knew what was in store for him.

And this little light, poor as it was, was soon to be denied him.

While Nero was there, grinning at his young master, he was alarmed by a noise close behind him.

The poor, faithful monkey could not understand what was said.

But the voices were those of enemies, and so Nero made off.

Gliding along the parapet, he dodged down behind a stack of chimneys.

And just as he had taken up his position to watch what was going on, the three men crept over the roof, and made their way to the chimney from which Nero had just emerged.

"This is the chimney."

Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"To work, then."

"Where's the mortar?"

"Here it is."

Emmerson watched without rendering any assistance, and as the work proceeded he criticised its utility.

"The boy is safe enough where he is," said Emmerson.

"We know that."

"Then why waste your time in blocking up the chimney top?"

"He might live."

"Well?"

"And we don't exactly want that."

"But you don't want him to die at once."

"No."

"What, then?"

"He must be made sure. We were tricked out of our revenge in the wood."

"There's not much danger this time of his being discovered," said Emmerson; "but you seem anxious not to cause him unnecessary pain."

"Well?"

"Yes; if it is a question of humanity," said Emmerson, with a sneer, "all well and good."

"What do you mean?" growled Hunston.

"Simply this," returned Emmerson, "that by closing the chimney in, you will make an end of it too quickly. I should have liked the brat to die slowly; for him and that cursed monkey to have gnawed at each other, and fought when the pangs of hunger were on them hard, and to have dragged on a miserable end. That's what I call vengeance."

"It is—it is!" cried Toro.

"These Harkaways have as many lives as a cat," Hunston went on to say; "and if we left him half a loop-hole, he might escape us yet."

"He might," admitted Toro.

"I can't see how, for one," said Emmerson.

"No matter; let us make sure. 'Safe bind,' you know."

"All right."

And as they talked, they set to work with tiles and mortar to end their fatal business.

Young Jack saw his daylight gone, and his heart sank.

He did not understand it at first.

His idea was that Nero had returned, and was lolling over the chimney-pot so thoroughly as to block out the light.

But he could not deceive himself so far long.

The daylight was unmistakably gone, and with it all hope. Alas, poor Jack!

There was no hope.

None.

"I wonder how Nero will get on," thought young Jack to himself. "I wonder if he will find his way to dad or to Mr. Mole, or to any one who can help me."

"Let me think," he said to himself again and again.

"What is to be done?"

"The wall is newly built," he thought to himself, "and so it can't be very strong."

He pushed against it with desperation, but he might as well have tried to move the Pyramids.

Then he tried to bring the knife which Nero had let fall into use.

He dug and picked at the mortar with great perseverance, until by dint of much hard work, he contrived to insert the point of the knife into the mortar between the bricks.

He pushed on and on at this until he fell asleep over his task, and forgot, for the time at least, all his troubles, and forgot even that he had been entombed alive.

CHAPTER XXII.

YOUNG JACK woke up with a feeling of stiffness in every joint, and an alarming hunger upon him.

He was not aware for a moment of what had taken place, but he soon discovered this in stretching out his hands, for he grazed his knuckles against the walls of his narrow prison.

This was a forcible reminder.

By degrees it all came back to him.

He remembered all that had occurred; poor Dick Harvey stricken down, the brutal usage, his violent abduction, and finally being buried alive in that horrible place.

How long he had slept he had no idea, for it was pitch dark when he fell asleep, and it was equally dark now.

Not a ray of light, any more than one of hope! Poor young Jack!

He little thought that he had slept for fifteen hours at a stretch.

The stillness and darkness of his cell had lulled him off.

It was night when he dropped off to sleep; it was night now.

Always night!

"I wish I had slept a few hours more," he said to himself, "instead of waking so soon."

"I could then have forgotten all my troubles."

"I can't help myself at all; as it is, it is no use trying."

"They'll never think of looking for me here."

"I wish I could go to sleep or die."

And then he felt very much inclined to weep.

But when he found the tears rising to his eyes he felt ashamed of himself.

So he drove them resolutely back and resolved, come what might, to die like a brave boy.

What was he doing when he dropped off?

He remembered now that he was trying to pierce the wall.

He thought awhile, and then by degrees he recollected, too, that he was meeting with some slight encouragement when sleep had conquered him.

"Where is Nero's knife, though?" was his next question.

He groped along the wall until he came across the handle, sticking in just where he had left it.

Then young Jack fell on his knees and offered up a prayer for help.

Poor boy, he needed help in that dark cell.

Alone and shut out from the world.

Springing to his feet, once more he set to work.

"I'm precious hungry," he said to himself.

His trouble assumed a new shape.

He would die of starvation beyond all doubt.

He set to work with redoubled vigor to pick away the mortar at the hole in the wall, until it suddenly yielded to his pressure.

He drew back his instrument, and then, by all that was lucky! there was daylight through. This was glorious.

It gave young Jack heart and hope.

He forgot hunger, fatigue, despair, and sucked greedily at the draughts of comparatively fresh air which the aperture admitted.

It was at first meat and drink for him.

But such sustenance could only suffice for a short time.

After awhile the old pangs of hunger returned.

He was going to starve!

Of this he was sure.

Still he meant to die hard.

He had heard of sailors wrecked without food or water, and he remembered how they began by "taking in a reef," in other words, by tightening their waist belts.

He profited by this reminiscence.

But still nature would not be denied.

"I shall die soon," he said to himself, "and what will they say of me? Will dad say that I was a thoughtless young monkey, and disobedient?"

"Ah, no; poor dear dad! he will forget my bad conduct and talk only of my good qualities, I know that well enough. And ma, and little Emily, what will she say?"

"She won't think much of me."

"She'll throw my gift, away, and as for hers—"

He stopped short.

What of hers?

What had he done with it?

She had given him a box of chocolates, you will remember.

He had it still with him.

He fished out the box from his pocket.

But a box of chocolates is only a small stay for a growing boy.

After the contents of the box were all devoured, the

pangs returned, and although he fought hard against them, they were too much for him.

Slowly, yet surely, he drooped, drooped, and sank, and presently he was powerless to help himself.

Three days and three nights passed in this way.

On the fourth day, poor young Jack, was as near death as ever living soul was yet.

For twelve hours he had done nothing in the way of struggling out of his imprisonment.

His strength was gone.

A faint sickly feeling was creeping over him.

A chilly sensation was stealing over his young heart, and a nameless dread was upon him. This was surely death.

"Mother!" he cried, sinking upon the ground helplessly; "dear, dear mamma!—dear father!—Emily dear! Oh! how dreadful to die so young, like poor Harry Girdwood."

And then, with broken phrases of prayer upon his lips, poor young Jack sank senseless.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Mrs. MOLE dived under the bedclothes, but Mr. Mole was too frightened himself to allow his domestic partner to hide away, while he was alone to face the danger, if there was really any danger to face.

"Chloe!" cried Mr. Mole, still wagging his one leg out of bed in a threatening manner at the supposed dreadful object at the foot of the bedstead, "Chloe!"

"Ugh!" grunted his partner from under the sheets.

"Come out."

"Nebber!" replied his spouse.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Mole, severely, "What is there to be afraid of?"

"Nuffin'."

"Just my sentiments. Then why don't you come out?"

"I won't—I won't; de nully ting come for you, not me."

"It's ridiculous, Chloe," said Mr. Mole, his teeth chattering with fright.

"Come out, do," continued Mr. Mole, imperatively.

And then he tried to rout her out.

But to judge from his manœuvres, in trying to get under the bed clothes, he was more full of shielding himself from danger than of convincing Mrs. Mole that there was nothing to fear.

In fact, not to disguise the facts of the case, he got as far under the bedclothes as he could; and when, after a good twenty minutes, his head emerged therefrom, and looked about, that dreadful vision had disappeared from the foot of the bed.

"Gone!"

Well might he be astonished, for it was indeed amazing. How that weird and spectral-looking visitor had contrived to disappear so effectually it would be difficult to say.

Mr. Mole, however, accounted for it to himself.

"Gone! Oh, I see," he muttered; "it was all my fancy. But it's really very extraordinary what lengths one's fancy will carry one."

And he crouched down in the bed closer to Mrs. Mole, and covered up his head too.

A precious old humbug was Isaac Mole.

One of the worst of humbugs, for he tried to humbug himself.

He lay trembling from head to foot, so that his wooden leg, lying at the bottom of the bed, rattled against the end of the bedstead, while he heard some one very distinctly moving about the room.

And yet he pretended to be asleep when Mrs. Mole popped her black head out and called his attention to the alarming sounds.

"Mr. Mole," said his fair spouse; "Isaac!"

Never a word from Mole.

He was too artful to answer, for he guessed what was wanted.

He would be expected to get up and do the manly thing—to rout out the intruder.

"That's all very well," said Isaac Mole to himself, when it occurred to him in this light, "but I might not be able to carry it off with that dash that one is accustomed to associate with the heroes of romance. I might, in fact, be the routed out, instead of the router."

"Isaac!" whispered his wife from under the clothes, nudging him again.

He could keep silent no longer, as she now began to pinch, and if there was one thing more than another that worried Mr. Mole, it was a pinch from Mrs. Mole.

So he grunted:

"Eh, dear? What now?"

"Hush! Get up; there's the ole gemman hisself here," said Mrs. Mole. "Me tink him must want you."

But Mr. Mole was not to be roused.

Mrs. Mole, however, was possessed of the great virtue of perseverance, and she pegged away at her spouse until he could no longer affect not to hear.

At length he sat up in bed, keeping close to Mrs. Mole, and they both looked about them. Nothing was to be seen.

The cause of all their alarm had vanished.

The new-married couple looked at each other sheepishly.

"Well, dear?" said the artful male Mole.

"Well, dear," responded the female Mole, "there's nuffin'."

"Of course not."

"Well?"

"Well, my dear?"

"What's all this noise for, dear?"

Humbug again, that you are, Isaac Mole, and possessed of what an elastic mind to be so easily made up to anything you may wish.

He had just before been in an alarming state of mind on account of that fearsome sight which both he and his wife had witnessed, and now he chose to look upon it as a mental hallucination, because he did not wish to be made uncomfortable.

"Of course it was nothing," he said. "It was all my fancy."

"What was?"

"What? Why, that."

"Yes, Isaac," returned his better half; "but it wasn't mine."

"Nonsense, my dear; your fancy was biased by my own—that's all."

Mrs. Mole scratched her nightcap.

"That means you persuaded me to think the same as you did."

"Well, yes," replied Mr. Mole, involuntarily.

"Then that couldn't be by no means."

"Why?"

"Because I didn't know what you thought. You neber tole me, Isaac, and I see a ghost as plain as possible, so get out and look, and when you got him tight, tell dis child."

"What was it like?" asked her husband, wishing to gain the necessary time to screw up his courage to the sticking place.

"Half like de ole one, an' half like a monkey."

She was mistaken in this.

The ghostly visitor was a good deal more like a monkey.

At length Mrs. Mole, growing impatient, and partly reassured herself, slid from the bed, with her eyes fixed upon the late perch of that grim visitor.

Isaac Mole could no longer hang back.

He stumped down on to the floor on the other side of the bed.

And then the search began.

They looked everywhere—high and low—but no trace of anything or anybody could be seen.

At length Mrs. Mole appeared to be on the scent.

"Hush!" she cried, holding up her finger warningly.

"What?"

"A noise in the chimney," responded Mrs. Mole.

Mr. Mole listened, and surely enough there came sounds of an inexplicable character from that direction.

So, with an effort of courage, he advanced to make a reconnaissance, when just as he got his head well forward there was a scramble in the flue, and down came a regular cloud of soot.

"A-chew!" cried Mr. Mole, suddenly converted into a "man an' a brudder" much more promptly than by Sunday's system at the memorable lecture.

"A-chew!" sneezed his spouse.

And they kept up this peculiar duet for several minutes.

After awhile, the titillation of their olfactories ceased, and the cloud of soot cleared off.

So they drew carefully nearer to the chimney again, and then Mrs. Mole gave a loud cry of alarm.

"What is it my dear?" asked her husband, hanging back.

"Look up."

Mr. Mole advanced very carefully this time, and he was just soon enough to catch a glimpse of a long, hirsute tail flick along and disappear.

"Good Heaven!"

"Oh, mercy!"

And there they stood, trembling and staring at each other, like two half daft people, suddenly stricken with palsy.

* * * * *

Meanwhile, Nero careered gaily up the chimney again. He had taken alarm at the aspect of Mrs. Mole in her night cap, and so he returned by the way he had come—up the chimney.

This was the explanation of the whole of the ghost mystery.

Up the chimney and over the roof went Nero, only pausing for the luxury of an occasional flea.

When he had got along some little distance, he began to look about him for a new chimney.

He had no great liking for the roofs, and he had been traveling along from house to house so far that he began to have quite enough of it.

The corner stack of the next chimney took his fancy, so he dropped over, put in his tail carefully, and then followed with his legs.

Facile decensus flue.

He found it easy going for awhile, but presently the atmosphere of the chimney appeared to change and get warmer with very remarkable suddenness.

At first it was more agreeable than otherwise.

But by degrees it grew to be too warm to be pleasant. Then a faint smell of smoke arose, and in the course of a few minutes it grew so dense that Nero was well-nigh choked.

He squeaked, and spluttered and squealed, and then up he went again.

But before he got to the top, it so far overcame him that he grew suddenly dizzy.

The consequence might be anticipated.

Up there went such a volume of smoke that it choked the unlucky monkey, and down he came with a run.

He scattered the fire, and frightened them all half out of their wits.

The occupants of the room started back into the different corners of the room, as Nero, like an animated ball of soot, rolled into the room.

Nero jumped up and squeaked, and then shook the soot from his face.

Those present, however, appeared to recognize him.

"Nero!"

A general chorus of astonishment ensued.

"Nero!" said everybody in a breath.

Nero, having shaken his vision clear, surveyed the company.

"It is my Jack's monkey," ejaculated the voice of Harkaway.

Nero grinned.

He knew him well enough.

The room-into which Nero had so unceremoniously introduced himself was the sitting-room of Mrs. Harkaway, young Jack's mother.

The calamity which had just befallen the family had fairly prostrated her, and their medical adviser had ordered her to keep her room.

But that her spirits might not be allowed to drop, she was to keep as much company as possible.

And so there chanced to be there present, Emily and Jack Harkaway, the elder, Mrs. Harvey, and Ada.

"Poor Nero!" said Jack Harkaway, having recovered from his first surprise. "Nero, where is your young master and our old friend Harvey?"

"Ah, he can tell us," said Emily, with eagerness.

Could he?

Alas! we believe that they would have given half their fortune—aye, the whole of it if they could have invested Nero then with the gift of speech.

"Nero," said Jack, "come here, my intelligent friend, and let us know what has become of my boy."

Nero sat upright before them, surveying the company and grinning.

"Perhaps he's hungry," suggested Mrs. Harkaway.

He was too.

You would not long have remained in doubt upon that subject had you seen him dispose of some bread and a few apples.

While Nero was enjoying his meal, Mr Magog Brand, the dwarf, was announced.

"Show him in at once," said Harkaway.

The little gentleman entered with a downcast face that reflected its sadness and disappointment in Harkaway's.

The dwarf shook his head.

"What luck?" demanded Harkaway.

"None, so far."

"And Mr. Jefferson; where is he at present?"

"Outside."

The fact was that Mr. Jefferson had so signally failed in his hunt after young Jack that his hope was gone.

His spirits drooped in consequence.

"Our latest idea was to return to the empty house, where they once forced our dear boy," said the little gentleman.

"Why there?" asked Harkaway. "It was scarcely a likely place."

"So say I."

"Then why try it?"

"Because Jefferson has his own obstinate views upon the matter. Because he's as difficult to move as a mule. There's no doing anything with him if once he gets a fancy into his head."

"What does he say?"

"He is convinced that Jack is spirited away there somewhere."

"Where?"

"In the house."

"Impossible!"

"So say I."

"But upon what does he base his fancy?"

"He says he is sure that they have some hiding-place there—that when he came up so well in the nick of time before they were about to stow Jack away; but, if you remember, the villains suddenly made their escape."

"But where?"

"Precisely," said Mr. Brand; "that's what I say to Jefferson."

"Well, but you have been there?"

"Yes."

"And found nothing?"

"Nothing."

"Then his obstinacy is cured at last?"

Mr. Magog Brand shook his head and laughed sadly.

"Not at all. That's the curious part of it. He is just as positive as ever that young Jack is stowed away there."

"It is impossible?"

"So I think," answered the dwarf, pensively. "Yet Jefferson is cautious and bold. It seems the result of some strange instinct—some strange inspiration, more than anything else. Why, he spent half an hour if he spent a minute in the room where he rescued young Jack before."

"The same room?"

"The very same. Yet it is not a place containing holes and nooks. You can take it all in at a glance. I have told him that it is impossible that anything can have occurred there, for it no longer is the deserted house it was. The builders are at work there. In the very rooms he hovers about so, they have been completing some of the brickwork!"

And the brave Jefferson had, in his search for young Jack, been so close to him that his hands had wandered a dozen times over the newly-placed bricks, behind which young Jack Harkaway was slowly, yet surely, dying of hunger and suffocation!

"What noise is that?" asked Harkaway, looking towards the door.

The next moment the door was burst rudely open, and Mr. Jefferson strode in, dragging Mr. Mole with him.

"A letter from Jack!" cried the big American, wildly; "look—a letter from Jack!"

The ladies shrieked.

Emily turned faint, and Harkaway grew as pale as death.

"A letter from Jack—my Jack?"

"Yes."

"Jefferson," said little Mr. Brand, "are you mad?"

"Mad?—no. Here is the letter, and our good friend Mr. Mole has brought it."

"Mr. Mole!" cried Emily.

"Yes, my dear lady."

"Is this true?"

"It is."

"Oh, Mr. Mole!" exclaimed young Jack's mother. "I thought my boy was with you. But it is at any rate a consolation to find you have some news."

"News!" iterated Mole, who was apparently more than half stupefied by it himself. "I have a letter."

"Where's the letter? Pray give it to me," said Emily, with eagerness.

"Here!"

"Oh, give it to me—quick!"

She took it, scanned it through, and then she sank back, as though overcome by what she had read.

Harkaway took the letter and read it down twice.

He was amazed.

It is needless to say that this was the letter which poor young Jack had written under difficulties, after being bricked up in the chimney of the empty house.

"Whom did this come from?" exclaimed Harkaway, excitedly.

"Who brought it?"

"Yes, yes," echoed everybody present; "who brought the letter?"

"Why don't you answer, sir?" said Jefferson to the tutor, in a tone of remonstrance.

"I brought it," answered Mr. Mole, "and it was brought to me by a ghost."

"A ghost!"

"A what?"

"Nonsense."

"An evil ghost," persisted Mr. Mole. "We took it for the devil himself because of his tail, which we caught sight of as he flew up the chimney."

But Harkaway began to see the real state of the case, and his views were confirmed by Jefferson, who cried, suddenly:

"I see it all!"

"You do, you do!" ejaculated Emily. "What is it? Oh, pray explain, Mr. Jefferson!"

"I will, willingly. Nero brought this letter. It wants no magician to tell that; it says so in the letter itself."

"It does!"

"True."

"Go on."

"Gently," said Mr. Jefferson; "and it confirms my views—my obstinate opinion, as my friend Magog calls it."

"Then you think—"

"That young Jack is in the house where I found him before, and where I am going to find him again."

"Hurrah! hurrah!"

And before they could utter another word, Jefferson had dashed out of the room."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE bold Jefferson was a man of action—not of words.

He set to work.

Firstly, he set two or three persons at once to fetch picks and spades.

At the same time he had a cab brought to convey the party to the scene of action.

The object of this was to avoid creating any unnecessary sensation.

In less than twenty minutes they were upon the scene.

He led the way quickly upstairs to the room where the unhappy victim was bricked up, and there Jefferson, after a brief glance round the room, pointed to the fresh brickwork.

"Set to work there; lose not a moment," he said to his assistants.

They obeyed readily.

"Ply your pick and spade quicker."

"Any fool might have guessed as much," said he, half to himself; "and so should I if I hadn't let myself be half persuaded from it by that Magog, idiot that I was. Poor boy—poor boy! I much fear he is dead."

It was not a long job for them.

In less than one-sixth of the time that it had taken the villainous accomplices to build up that hideous tomb, they had dragged it down.

And when they had got it sufficiently demolished to secure a firm hold, they made a desperate tug at it.

But it held firm.

"Stand away," said Mr. Jefferson; "let me try."

Then, with one mighty tug, down came the brickwork, and there a heart-breaking spectacle stood before them.

The unhappy young Jack was livid.

Death was fastening on him rapidly.

Hunger was within an ace of completing the work.

As the wall gave way, he gave a faint, hollow groan.

The pallor of death was upon him.

His eyes were lusterless.

His lips wore the hue of the grave.

Probably a few minutes more would have settled it.

Suddenly a cry arose from the end of the room.

A wail of heartfelt anguish.

"My boy, my boy! Oh, my poor darling Jack!"

It was Harkaway.

The grief stricken father would have burst his way through them, but Jefferson held him back with a gentle, yet resolute hand.

"Quietly, Harkaway, quietly," he said, in a low voice.

"Consider the dreadful state your poor boy is in."

"Let me take him in my arms, Jefferson."

"Keep back!"

"Unhand me, I say, Jefferson," said Harkaway, growing indignant in his impatience. "Would you insult me?"

"No, Harkaway; you know that well."

"Then I say—"

"Patience! I will not let you or any man kill our poor boy by folly or imprudence until all that can be done has been tried to save him."

"Kill him?"

"Yes."

"What mean you?"

"Can't you see?"

"No."

"Then wait till the doctor comes."

He had been sent for, and just then he put in an appearance.

"Good Heaven!" exclaimed the man of skill, startled out of his accustomed calmness by such an unwonted spectacle. "Who can have done this?"

"Friends—devils!" answered Jack's father, wringing his hands. "Oh, would that I had them in my clutch now!"

"Calm yourself," said the doctor, reprovingly. "There is life here, and that is all. It hangs upon a thread."

"Is he in great danger?" asked Harkaway, eagerly.

The doctor nodded.

"I will not answer for the consequence," he replied, gravely, "if he is rudely disturbed. True affection is shown more in the restraint which one puts upon one's feelings than in noisy demonstrations. The least shock may kill him."

"Trust me, then."

"Hush!"

The doctor took a bottle from his pocket, and unscrewed the stopper with mathematical precision, as he said in a whisper:

"See he has fainted. He may go off in that state."

Who shall describe the torture that poor Harkaway suffered, upon hearing this fatal opinion given in such a way?

To be restored to his brave boy, only to know that the slightest accident, any moment, might snatch him away again, was indeed agonizing.

Hunston had indeed part of his long sought revenge on Harkaway at that moment.

They had to wait and watch.

The doctor placed a phial to the poor boy's nostrils, and held it there with considerable patience for a time.

Presently there was a slight twitching of the face, and the doctor looked up at Harkaway.

There were evident signs of satisfaction in the doctor's face.

"He lives yet," he whispered to Harkaway.

The nostrils of the patient dilated faintly—then came a gentle sigh.

The doctor took the phial from his nostrils and applied it to his mouth.

A single drop of this sent a thrill through the suffering boy's frame from head to foot.

He opened his eyes.

Harkaway was about to rush forward again, when the doctor restrained him with a warning glance.

Jack looked about him in a half-dazed manner.

"Here, my boy," said the doctor, "taste this."

Some weak brandy and water had been brought, and young Jack sipped at this, and at each sip his strength recovered.

His expression grew less vacant by degrees, and his eyes glistered.

His senses were returning rapidly.

The first face his eyes rested upon was his father's, and with a smile of recognition, he murmured:

"Father."

It was half playfully done, half sadly.

Then looking up again, he cried:

"Dad!"

"My boy!—my boy!" faltered poor Harkaway.

"Are you cross with me still? You—it wasn't my fault—I fought hard. They were three against me, after striking down poor Harvey."

He sank back.

The effort was too much for him, and it took the doctor some few minutes to bring him round again.

"Tell dad not to be cross," said young Jack.

"I won't tell him anything," said the doctor, with an assumption of sternness he was very far from feeling, "unless you promise to be very calm and quiet."

"I will—I will."

"Then I daresay Mr. Harkaway will forgive you, though damme if I know for what," he added, under his breath.

The next moment Harkaway was kneeling on the ground beside his boy, and there father and son, once more united, mingled their tears.

CHAPTER XXV.

It was some time before they could venture to move the unfortunate boy.

But when once they could get him back home, his return to health was not a very long job.

Now, it was about a fortnight after the events just narrated that one evening, just towards dusk the Harkaway family were all assembled, talking over the strange fate and absence of Dick Harvey.

"Poor Harvey," said Harkaway, in reply to Emily.

At this moment three visitors were announced.

They proved to be Mr. Nabley and his brother detective, Daniel Pike, in company with young Harry Girdwood.

"You mentioned Mr. Harvey," said Pike, "I have news of him."

"Tell us quickly, then," said Jack, for Hilda had retired a few minutes before.

"It took me a great deal of trouble to find him, but at length I managed to discover the chamber where he was lying apparently at death's door."

"I had him moved; a first-rate physician has restored him, and here he is."

At the word Dick rushed into the room and greeted his old friends.

"But where is Hilda?" he asked, looking round.

"Not far off," said Emily.

In a few minutes more all were happily reunited, and the detectives retired with a handsome reward, taking young Girdwood with them.

The latter was the inseparable companion of the two English detectives now.

He devoted himself to hunting down the murderers of his beloved brother Oliver.

His whole life was devoted to it.

Now it fell out that soon after that alarming encounter in the woods which young Jack and his monkey had with Hunston and Toro, Harry Girdwood went to the scene of the strife one night to take observations.

His object was clear.

The Bowery gang had mysteriously fled.

Disappeared.

But where?

He held a very decided opinion that the Bowery gang intended sailing away with Captain Clemmans.

The time for their departure was not yet up.

Meanwhile, they had some hiding-place.

Harry Girdwood hovered about the wood night and morning.

At length his perseverance was rewarded.

He came upon three of the party unexpectedly.

Hunston was one.

Toro was another.

The third man he had some difficulty in recognizing at first.

It was Protean Bob.

It was here that these desperadoes lurked and skulked away.

Harry Girdwood crept into the thick brushwood close to their very feet.

It was a dangerous game to play.

But he thought of his poor murdered brother, and nerved himself up for the task.

"Have you got any news, Emmerson?" asked Hunston.

"When shall we go, then?"

"That you can know to-morrow if you like."

"What hour?"

"I cannot say, but early."

"Will you bring us the news?" demanded Toro.

"No; I have to be elsewhere, and I want one of you to go on a message for Clemmans, down Broadway. I think you had better do that."

"I?" said Hunston.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Toro's big body is a sort of landmark, and is likely to betray both himself and us."

"True."

"Very good," said Toro; "then I'll be here."

"Clemmans' messenger will whistle as he crosses the water."

"Very good; I will answer."

And after this they separated.

Then, when the coast was clear, Harry Girdwood crept out of his hiding place and hurried off to Fifth avenue, where he sought first Nabley and Daniel Pike, the detectives.

To them he confided all that he had heard.

And then a grand expedition was organized.

The two detectives and Harry Girdwood went off, to lay Hunston by the heels.

Harkaway, Harvey, Jefferson, Magog Brand, the two darkeys and young Jack went after Toro.

"To which party shall I attach myself?" asked Mr. Mole.

"Why, sir?" said young Jack.

"Why, because I must do my share," replied the tutor pompously.

"In what respect, sir?" demanded his pupil.

"It is likely to inspire the enemy with a wholesome fear, in fact, great dread, when he hears my name."

Young Jack stuffed his handkerchief into his mouth to stifle his laughter.

"Yes, Jack, my boy, I shall first bid farewell to Mrs. Mole; for as I shall tackle this giant brigand single-handed, I think it better to say farewell to my dear wife, in case I should not return alive."

"Oh, Mr. Mole," cried Jack, "no fear. You'll return to Mrs. Mole all alive, all alive, oh!"

Mr. Mole made up his mind to go.

And go he did.

"You know Jack," said he to his pupil, "these scenes of activity are my proper sphere."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes, I never shine to such advantage as when in a scrimmage of some kind."

"I should not have believed it, sir," responded young Jack, comically, "unless you had told me yourself."

Mr. Mole was cross.

"And why not? Do you, then, take me for a coward?"

"Good gracious, no."

"I should hope not," said Mr. Mole, with dignity. "In my earlier days I earned some not unmerited distinction, at least so the world has been good enough to say, by my address in action. Many's the man I have laid low with this powerful arm, Jack, my boy."

"Indeed, sir."

"One's reputation is sure to cling to one. I shall go; in all probability I may be of very signal service, and perhaps be the means of saving all your lives."

"I am glad, sir, you will go."

"Yes, my dear boy," replied the great Mole; "fear not, for in the hour of danger my courage and power shall make Toro the giant tremble!"

And the noble Mole departed, leaving young Jack to explain to his father Mr. Mole's intention of fighting the brigand single-handed.

They started before daybreak, and crossed the water as quietly as possible.

They had not long to wait.

Toro was eager to learn the news, and got to the appointed spot before the time.

Just as he arrived, he heard a whistle from the water.

"They are here," said the Italian half aloud.

Toro took a whistle from his pocket, and blew the answering call.

It echoed shrilly in the forest for awhile. Then something whizzed through the air.

Before he could utter a word, a rope flew over his head and as it dropped to his elbows, it tightened.

There was a jerk, and down he was dragged by the lasso, which had been so dexterously thrown over him by Magog Brand.

A moment more, and the murderer and brigand was surrounded by the whole of the Harkaway party.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CAUGHT.

CAGED at last.

The brigand struggled and wrestled like a second Samson.

But it would have taken something more than the strength of even that hero to have broken his bonds.

The assembled enemies of the brigand formed a formidable muster.

On every hand stood a foe.

Here was Sunday, holding a hatchet, ready to bury its ugly blade in the prisoner's head should he contrive, in his desperate struggles, to set himself free.

Besides Sunday stood young Jack, covering the writhing giant with a pistol.

Next to young Jack stood our old friend Isaac Mole, armed with a pistol in each hand, two pistols in a belt round his waist, and a long sword by his side.

But Mr. Mole was evidently in doubt about his own address in the handling of firearms, for he held them at arm's length and averted his gaze.

Had they chanced to explode, it is probable that he would have done more damage to his own party than to the prisoner.

Next to Mr. Mole stood Dick Harvey, still pale and weak from Toro's attack, and Jack Harkaway.

And, although Toro saw all this, he struggled on.

Had he been unfortunate enough to wriggle himself free from his cords, he would have been done to death before he could have stirred from the spot.

But luckily for him, he could not.

Little Magog Brand came up just then with Monday.

"Now, friends all," he said, with so cheerful an air that no one could have anticipated the proposition which he was about to make; "shall we get the noose ready?"

Toro heard.

This was evident enough, for the words sank deeply into his soul.

They meant to hang him.

"He felt sure that his fate was sealed when once he was trapped, yet the thoughts of death by strangulation were dreadful to him.

The Italian ruffian was, of course, no coward.

No, he was brave enough in his way.

Yet his courage was of that peculiar cast which would lead him to face death in action—meet the most formidable foes you could find him—aye, even at the cannon's mouth, but he could not meet his fate coolly as a Briton or a Yankee would.

He turned livid.

"Shall we hang de tief," asked Monday, "or shall we tie him up and roast him fust? De big beast roast well."

There spoke the savage.

Long intercourse with the Harkaways had smoothed it down, you see, but could not entirely eradicate the natural instincts of the ex-Prince of Limbi.

"Let's tie um up and whip um up a bit?" suggested Sunday.

"No."

"Only a little bit, Massa Harkaway," pleaded the darkey.

But Harkaway would not bear of it.

"We are not wild Indians, nor are we savages," said he. "He has earned his death, and die he must; but we are civilized people, and cannot put a fellow creature to death by torture."

The silence of the surroundings showed clearly enough that they entirely agreed with this sentiment.

"What shall we do with him?" said Harvey.

"Burn him like a ole 'possum up a gum tree," suggested Sunday.

"Tie him up by his toes to a tree," added Monday. "De big villain tie Massa Jack up and put bullet in dis child's ribs."

"Let's hang him," persisted Magog Brand. "And do it at once to get the vermin out of our sight."

Toro scowled at the speaker.

He could have almost met his fate with resignation, if he could but have annihilated the dwarf first.

"True," said Harkaway. "Mr. Brand is right; but should we not give him up to justice?"

"Justice is here. Shall he hang?"

"Remember, Massa Harkaway," said Monday, "de big brute nearly kill Massa Jack twice, and perhaps him do it quite third time."

"Well," said Harkaway, "he has lived like a cur, he has warred against boys and women, and no enemy has been too small for him. Let him hang like a rabid cur; he deserves his fate."

Toro writhed.

Every vein in his huge carcase swelled with his mighty struggle to free himself from bondage.

His face and forehead grew purple, until it was hideous to look upon him, for you would have expected each moment to see the blood start from his eyes or nostrils.

This was torture.

His more civilized captors did not understand torture according to the Limbian programme, nor as the darkey's African brother would suggest.

But they tortured him far worse than any physical agony could possibly have done.

The scathing contempt they showed for him ate into his very soul.

You have often seen how he writhed under the biting tongue of his fellow-ruffian, Hunston.

How much more, then, must he have suffered now?"

Now, curious to relate, amidst all this bitter hatred shown to the captive giant, the one person who felt inclined to relent was the one who had been the greatest sufferer from his violence.

Young Jack.

He was not squeamish.

He did not fear the sight of blood, but he could not endure to contemplate such utter helplessness.

He would not have cared had Toro fallen in fight.

But there was a grim solemnity about the condemning a fellow-creature to death in cold blood, which horrified the boy.

"We are all agreed?" demanded the dwarf.

"Yes."

Every voice responded with the fatal monosyllable "Yes."

That "Yes" sounded in Toro's ears like a death knell.

The miserable man fought hard with his feelings.

He shuddered in spite of himself.

Now came the fatal order:

"Get ready the rope."

The heart of the man mountain, this mammoth tyrant, sank down to his very heels.

He bit his tongue and clenched his teeth to prevent their chattering.

"Hyar's de rope, Massa," said Sunday; "I's made a levingly noose; me show it him."

"Yes, let him see it," cried Monday; "it am better rope and stronger dan him use for poor Massa Jack in de woods."

Toro shut his eyes.

At any rate, he would not look at this hideous thing which was to choke the breath of life out of him.

So he thought. So he resolved.

But think you he could keep to this purpose?

No, struggle as he would, it had a fatal fascination for him, and he was forced to open his eyes to look upon the cool, deliberate preparations being made for his own execution.

"Let me see the rope," said Harkaway.

"Here, sar."

He took the rope and tried the noose against his knee as hard as he could.

And as he tugged, the fear-stricken wretch upon the ground drew mental agonizing pictures of the rope about his own throat, and thought how he should look as his face was convulsed with the death agony.

But Harkaway never thought of this.

His sole purpose was to see that the noose was properly made, and that the doomed man should not suffer any unnecessary pain.

It slipped a little way and then it stopped.

"Sunday."

"Yes, sar."

"Come here."

"Yes sar."

The negro approached, hanging his head.

"This will not do, Sunday," said Harkaway.

"Why not, sir?"

"Why not? You know why not; it would slip half way and thus cause him endless agony."

"Him not die too quick, sar," said Sunday; "die a little bit at a time like, nice and comfortable."

In spite of the solemnity of the occasion, they could not help forgiving Sunday's idea of making their enemy die "nice and comfortable."

"Let it be properly done," said Harkaway, sternly.

"Yes, sar."

The cheerfulness with which he assented made Harkaway still have his misgivings.

"I have already said once, Sunday," he said, "that we don't want to torture him. We want to put him out of the way of doing more mischief, as we would kill a scorpion or any other venomous reptile, but we will not have him put to any unnecessary pain."

"Yes, sar."

The making of the noose was taken out of Sunday's hands, and personally superintended by Magog Brand. It was tested fairly and found to be satisfactory.

"Ready."

The rope was thrown across the branch of the nearest tree. Toro turned faint.

"Up with him."

They got about him, and lifted him from the ground. Sunday got his hand down the prisoner's neckcloth, and contrived to give him a wrench or two that became each instant more and more unendurable.

"Aha, Massa Toro porol!" said the negro, kicking up his legs gleefully; "take that, and that!"

And "that," we can assure you, was not pleasant.

As Sunday had dropped upon a place which caused the prisoner the liveliest agony, he did not fail to profit by it.

He pressed harder and harder there, and Toro yelled with pain until Harkaway interfered.

"That is against orders, Sunday," he said, sharply.

"Him a dam tief, sar, and he make dis chile smell pertiklar agony on him nose once, sar, in de hotel, and now dis chile give him tokol!"

He did it, too.

Toko being administered—whatever "tokol" might be—the unhappy prisoner yelled with pain.

"Cry out, you cuss! you polecatl you wiper! you rat!"

At each epithet he gave Toro some little proof of his attention.

"Brave savage!" exclaimed Toro, bitterly, "worthy of your brave masters. You can torture a prisoner when he is well tied up, and when you are at least ten to one."

"Sunday," said Harkaway, sternly, "unless you desist you shall not stay here."

"All right, massa."

And then he gave him a final dig.

It was a good one, too.

Toro turned deadly pale with rage.

"Brave men," he said, with a sneer of profound contempt, "bold hearts! Why, if I had my arms free, you would fly for your very lives—aye, all of you, craven curs!"

"Oho!" laughed Magog Brand.

"Be not so boastful," cried Harvey. "Did you not in a most cowardly way take advantage of me, and strike me brutally, when helpless, and on the ground? If you had been a brave man, you would stood before me on equal terms."

"True," said Harkaway, "he is a coward, for he was one of three that tried to take the life of a young boy."

"So I know, to my sorrow," said young Jack. "But I wouldn't have him tortured, brutally as he used me."

"You are about as humane as the rest of them," retorted the giant, with a sneer.

"Let him go," said young Jack. "He'll promise never to molest us any more."

"He'll promise, perhaps," said Harvey, "but we know how much he would keep to his word."

"Come, we are losing time," said the dwarf.

The rope was got ready.

The end was thrown over the tree.

The noose was around the brigand's neck.

"If you have any last wish to make," said Harkaway, "any prayer to utter, now is the time. You must die, Toro, but I would not endanger your future life as well as this."

He changed color.

But never a word escaped him.

The last moment was near.

"Sunday."

"Yes, sar."

"Take the end of that rope."

"Yes, sar."

"Be ready."

"Quite ready, Massa Harkaway. Shall I pull up?"

It was shocking to hear his cheerful voice as he said this.

No one could have dreamt that he was talking of sending a fellow-creature out of the world.

"You have nothing to say?" asked Harkaway of the brigand.

Not a word.

A slight gnawing of the lip.

A faint shudder shook his frame.

Otherwise you would scarcely have known that the doomed man was cognisant of what was going on.

A pause.

"Sunday," said the dwarf, in dull, solemn tones, that inspired the listeners with awe, "ready!"

Sunday gave a tug, the rope strained, and Toro the giant was swinging in the air.

* * * * *

Suddenly a loud and stern voice was heard.

"Stop that!"

The speaker was Jefferson.

He had been quiet for some time.

Then the huge American, with a stroke of his knife, severed the rope, and Toro dropped on to the ground, considerably frightened, but little hurt.

"I'm not going to look on and see a man—well not a man—a skunk like that wiped out in cold blood."

"What do you mean?"

"I won't have it. Get up, Toro."

The latter obeyed.

"Hark you," said Jefferson. "You are an outrageous—the biggest villain I ever came across, but you shall have a chance for your life."

The Italians face lighted up at this.

"Do you hear me, a chance for your life?"

"Yes."

"Then answer me quickly," retorted Jefferson, "or I'll leave you to the rope. Have you any courage left?"

"More than the rest of the company put together, it strikes me," said Toro sullenly.

"Modest man," said Magog Brand, with a dry laugh.

"Well, my friend," said Jefferson, "now here's a proposition for you. You can have your choice."

"Speak."

"You can be hanged if you like, or you can be set free and fight it out."

"With all? Well, you are almost enough for me," said Toro, looking around him.

"I don't mean with all," answered Jefferson, "only with one."

"Which?"

"Me."

"Humph!"

The brigand looked just a little bit uneasy.

It was undeniably a joyous thing to escape death upon any terms, and such a death.

But Toro had once a slight brush with Jefferson, you will remember.

And the recollection of it was anything but pleasant.

In all his life he had encountered but one single man with whom he feared to cope.

This man was Jefferson, the American.

"Well, what do you say?"

"I consent."

"You will fight for your life?"

"I will."

It was reluctantly given.

It was, however, a matter of choice between two evils. Bad as it was, he naturally regarded this as the least.

"Set his arms free," said Jefferson, coolly.

At this point, Harkaway thought it high time to interfere.

"Jefferson," he said, "this must not be."

"Why not?"

"Because it is tempting Providence."

"How?"

"He is delivered into our hands, and you have no right to run any risk in the matter. I feel that it is quite lawful to put the villain out of the way of doing further mischief."

"That's my intention," said the Kentuckian, grimly; "only I like to do it in my own way, that's all. I don't like murder; it doesn't agree with my notions at all."

"But why should you risk your life? He has done me more harm than you, and if he must fight for his life, let me be the man that tries strength and skill against him," cried Harkaway. "And I say—"

"Say nothing, Harkaway," replied the other, interrupting him, "for it will make bad blood between us if you interfere. It will sever our friendship altogether."

This was enough.

Harkaway liked Jefferson too well to press the matter further.

"Cut the cords."

This was obeyed.

"Stand clear," said Jefferson. "and give us plenty of room and no favor. Now clear away."

This was done.

The two darkies climbed up into the branches of a tree, from which they commanded an excellent view of the scene.

"Harkaway," said the Kentuckian.

"Yes."

"You have heard the understanding between us; my word must be attended to."

"It shall."

"If he gets the best of it, he is to go free."

"Very good."

"And I know you will not go against this, my wish."

"As it is your wish, Jefferson, of course not."

"Very good."

Toro glanced about him with a restless look, which, however, did not escape the lynx-eyed Kentuckian.

"If he should attempt to bolt, you will shoot him down as remorselessly as if he were a rabid dog."

"We will."

"Stand clear, then."

"Now then, Signor Toro, when you are ready."

This was a moment of breathless interest. The Italian closed his eyes in a semi-sleepy manner and peered at his adversary through his lashes.

He waited a moment, hoping to take him off his guard. Then, as Jefferson turned his head for a moment towards Magog, the huge Italian came at him, like a bull that he got his name from.

Jefferson was ready, however. He stepped back, drew in his right arm, and then, as Toro came, he shot it out full at him with his whole force. A dull, heavy thud followed, and Toro's huge frame quivered all over. It steadied him in his headlong rush—dazed him. As he shook his head, half stunned at that steam hammer, you could see upon his forehead the sign of such a blow as would have put an end to you or any smaller man upon the instant.

"Ugh!" "Bravo, Massa Jefferson," cried Sunday, up in the tree. "Dat was a stinger," said Monday. It was indeed a doughty blow, and Toro did not appear to want any more of the kind. "Come along, Toro," said Jefferson; "there is more waiting."

Toro paused, but quickly went at it again. Jefferson put his fists up, and as Toro got within shot again, he let fly. Toro guarded wildly, but Jefferson planted his blows just when and where he pleased.

And he pleased to plant them pretty well all over that huge carcass. One, two, and one on the chest.

"Bang!" cried Sunday, in absurd delight. "Dat's done him good!"

The sight of his own blood made the brigand furious. He rushed upon Jefferson with the fury of a wild beast. And much to the surprise of all, Jefferson fell to the ground, borne down by the great force of the brigand's powerful blow.

But before he could throw himself on Jefferson, the latter was on his feet, and by a straight hit from the shoulder he drove Toro back.

Spank! One on the cheek. Ding-dong—two more in sharp succession.

"Postman's knock," cried Jefferson, laughing. The jeers of the two niggers made the Italian mad.

He made another rush at the American, and closing with him suddenly, again brought him with a heavy thud to the ground.

Quick as thought Jefferson was up and the brigand down.

Toro went at it again and again, vainly endeavoring to close with his adversary.

But each time he got a fresh visitation of an alarming kind.

The brigand's blood flowed freely. Jefferson had shown the spectators something which they had by no means been prepared for.

He was a splendid boxer. Words cannot describe the pent-up fury of the passionate Italian giant at the bitterness of the humiliation thus put upon him.

Goaded finally on to utter madness by the jeers of the two niggers in the tree, he gathered himself together for one mighty effort.

Ducking his head to avoid the sledge-hammer fists of the terrible American, he rushed at him, intending to butt him in the stomach.

Jefferson waited for him.

Then stepping aside in the very nick of time, he swung his clenched fist round, caught him fairly upon the ear, and stretched him senseless upon the ground.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Bravo!" "Hurrah!"

"Three cheers for Mr. Jefferson!" cried young Jack. "That last was a most elegant chop," said Mr. Mole,

who had been shivering with fright from behind a tree from the moment they had cut the brigand's bonds.

"Most elegant. I declare it almost reminds me of my best days."

"You're pilin' it on, Mr. Mole," said Jefferson smiling.

"I'm sincere," said Mr. Mole, blandly. "That was one of my favorite hits."

"Indeed."

"Fact, sir."

"That's quite true," said young Jack, maliciously. "I remember that you taught Mr. Pike that hit, when you gave him boxing lessons on board."

"Eh, what?"

He did not like that hint.

He felt sure that young Jack must be laughing at him. So he sang small at present.

The Italian lay still, motionless, insensible.

"Get him some water."

The darkies did not care to move from their perches to help the brigand.

Magog Brand ran for water and dashed it in his face. Slowly he revived.

They washed the blood from his face and head, and helped him to rise.

"Now, Signor Maccaroni," said Jefferson "do you think you'll be more civil in future?"

Toro hung his bruised head.

"You have earned the right to scoff at me," he said, bitterly; "laugh on."

"I don't want to laugh —"

"Oh, you can; you have it all your own way. But in my country we don't consider it generous to rail at a beaten foe."

"Nor here either."

"So it appears," muttered Toro, bitterly.

"The scoundrel," ejaculated Harvey. "Does he expect generous treatment? Why, where would any one of us have been had the conditions been reversed? Supposing any one of us had been in the power of your gang, what mercy would you have shown? Consideration, you unblushing vagabond?"

Every word Harvey said was full of reason.

What indeed would have been the fate of any unfortunate individual who had fallen into their clutches?

They had shown often enough what mercy they could show.

"You can laugh at your triumph," said Toro, "but it is not so great after all."

"Indeed."

"Oh!"

"No, indeed."

"And why?"

"Yes, why?" asked Magog Brand. "I am curious to hear what new impudence the rascal has to advance."

"We are not used to fight like that," said Toro, "like savages. This is your American civilization."

"Beg pardon, Signor Maccaroni," said Jefferson, with a good humored laugh, "nothing of the kind. That's British. I inherit that by instinct, by virtue of English blood, from my English mother, God bless her!"

"Your mother—"

"Now, silence!" said Jefferson, peremptorily, "for if you let your foul tongue utter one syllable against my mother, you'll get goss, I promise you. You mayn't like my English instincts, but by gum, sir, you'll relish my American instincts still less, I reckon."

"In civilized lands men fight otherwise."

"How?"

"With that?"

He pointed here to a bowie knife which Magog carried in his belt.

"Are you better at that than the other?" inquired Jefferson, carelessly.

Toro's eyes glistened.

"You wouldn't care to face me if I had that in my hand."

"Oh, yes, I should."

"Bah!"

"How d'ye spell it?" asked the American, with comic contempt.

"Give it me and try."

"Willingly," said Jefferson, calmly. "Magog, give it to him."

Magog obeyed.

Yes, to the unutterable horror and dismay of most of the spectators, they absolutely armed the formidable Italian with a knife.

Jefferson the same instant plucked out his own bowie, and stood upon guard.

"I'll not permit this," said Harvey.

And he would have rushed forward.

But the dwarf held him back.

"Stand back, Mr. Harvey," he said, sternly. "If you dare to meddle in it, you'll get our man spiked by that giant."

"Oh, Mr. Brand, Mr. Brand!" exclaimed Harvey, "this must not be allowed."

"What?"

"What have you done?"

"Nothing."

"Jefferson will be stabbed—killed perhaps."

"Don't you worry yourself. Jeff has shown you a taste of his quality. Now you just wait a bit."

"Toro," said Jefferson, "this is your last chance; let nothing distract your attention, for I warrant you I shall take every advantage this time. Your eye and your strong hand must save you, if you are to be saved at all."

Toro grunted out an ungracious reply.

Then he proceeded to take off his neckerchief and bind the knife to his hand with it.

The same office was meanwhile performed for Jefferson by his trusty friend the dwarf.

"Settle it quickly, Jeff," said Magog Brand.

"Very good."

It was amazing to hear the cool way in which they spoke it.

Anyone would have thought they were speaking of slaughtering a lamb or some helpless animal, instead of facing a formidable and armed enemy.

"Now then, Toro," said Jefferson, "are you ready? Look out—guard."

"Look to yourself," cried the brigand, fiercely; "this time the game is against you."

"Come on," said the American; "you waste time."

It was a desperate sight to behold.

Two huge men, armed with deadly weapons, ready to drink each other's life blood.

It was a fearsome sight to see them crouching and creeping round each other, with their eyes fixed with fierce intensity on each other's.

Each waiting to spring.

Involuntarily it called up descriptions of the gladiatorial combats in the Roman arenas of old.

Slowly, cautiously they trod the ground.

The lookers-on held their breaths in suspense.

"Hah!"

An involuntary gasp of fear from the whole of the spectators.

"Look, look!"

"He's down!"

Jefferson had stumbled over something.

Toro the giant was upon him instantly.

But Jefferson, catching himself nimbly, had only fallen upon one knee, and quick as an eye could wink, he was upon his guard.

As Toro bored in with uplifted knife, he caught his wrist.

Then with a mighty effort he dragged himself up.

And now, in the space of twenty seconds, there ensued a scene of such pent-up excitement as baffles description.

Jefferson struck as he rose, but being taken somewhat at a disadvantage, the Italian with a dexterous jerk twisted the knife fairly out of his hand, and sent it flying.

Fear—a deadly fear was expressed in every face.

Their gallant champion was worsted.

Harkaway was about to step forward, but was stopped by Jefferson's loud voice—

"Keep back, keep back!"

"Wait!"

"The fight is not yet over."

Jefferson had shown how he could fight on equal terms.

He now showed how he could fight in the face of disaster.

He grappled his colossal enemy boldly.

Gave him one mighty hug, then, lifting him fairly off his legs, he threw him over his hip on to the ground.

In such a way was it done, that when the Italian measured his length upon the ground, his own knife was seen buried up to the very hilt in his side.

The fight was over. They ran in and closed round the ex-brigand. Not a sigh—not a breath. It was all over.

"There," said Jefferson, adjusting his disordered dress in the coolest manner in the world; "that's over, and I don't think that that skunk will worry us any more."

Toro, the brigand and murderer, had indeed this time met with more than his match in the brave American.

"Your American and English blood seem to mingle well together, Jefferson," said Harkaway, advancing.

"You are indeed a fine representative of two nations mingled in one."

"Right, Harkaway," cried Jefferson; "and you are a fine, bold Englishman. Give me your hand."

And then the American, with the grip of a vice, seized the hand of Jack Harkaway.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Our friends gazed in silence on the Italian brigand for some time.

"It is a just fate for the villain," said Harkaway, after a long silence; "but what shall we do with the body?"

"Oh, leave the fellow here," said Jefferson. "I dare say some of the gang will find an opportunity of giving the body decent burial."

Then Harkaway and his friends returned home, after casting in silence one more look at the giant brigand.

* * * * *

Mr. Mole's nerves being out of order, he was recommended to take sea baths.

So a short trip was got up to an adjacent watering place.

It was upon the occasion of Mr. Mole's second sea bath that he met with an adventure.

Sunday used to drive the whole bathing party, consisting of himself and brother Monday, young Jack, and Mr. Mole, down to the particular spot of the coast where they were in the habit of taking their daily dip.

On the first morning, they were just nearing the bathing place, when suddenly there was a rush, a deep, bay-

ing sound, and a huge hound bounded over the hedge.

"What a fine fellow!" exclaimed young Jack.

"Beau'ful!" added Monday. "Big as a donkey."

"A very fine Newfoundland," said Mr. Mole, putting in his eyeglass.

"Eh!"

"What?" added Monday, with a grin.

"Mr. Mole is not 'doggy,'" explained young Jack; "he doesn't know the difference between a bloodhound and a Newfoundland."

The laugh that this created put Mr. Mole upon his dignity at once.

"Master Harkaway," said he, grandly. "I have kept Newfoundlands and bloodhounds too, before you were born or thought of."

"Indeed, sir."

"Yes, sir, and poodles and terriers too, as well as grey-

hounds, staghounds, foxhounds; in fact, every kind of hound. No man was more 'doggy,' as you were pleased to call it."

"I should never have thought it," said young Jack.

"No, you are a thoughtless youth," said Mr. Mole.

"True sir."

The bloodhound came bounding up to the side of the trap.

"Keep off, you ugly devil," said Sunday.

"Moderate your language, you nigger," said Mr. Mole.

"Dat Tiger am berry exceedingly damn dangerous, brudder Mole."

"Pish!" said Mr. Mole; "pshaw and tush likewise. Tiger, indeed!"

"Yes, sar; Tiger."

"Bloodhound."

"Tiger's the animal's name, brudder Mole."

Just then the dog jumped up, and made a snap, seemingly at Sunday's legs.

Sunday gave a howl and dropped the reins.

They were, however, very promptly caught by Monday, who whipped up and drove on rapidly.

But Tiger was not to be shaken off.

He bounded after the trap, barking in a way that appeared to frighten poor Sunday out of his seven senses.

"You craven-hearted crew," said Mr. Mole, "what is there to be afraid of?"

"Tiger."

"He shan't hurt you. If you are afraid, I will tackle the creature single-handed, and drive him off," said the brave Mole.

"He eat you, sar."

"That 'ere damn cannibal, brudder Mole, eat three niggers. Him a reg'lar ole nigger hunter, and he like de smell ob nigger's flesh. He wants to taste dis chile, I 'se sure."

"Rubbish!"

"He do, he do."

Tiger barked and jumped up slyly, encouraged by Monday, and Sunday appeared to grow more and more alarmed at every step.

"There," said Isaac Mole, looking about him, "there you see the infinite superiority of the white over the colored races; fancy a white man being afraid of a dog."

"Fancy," echoed young Jack, who swelted furiously.

"Though that dog might have eaten forty niggers, I should think no more of tackling him than of playing with a pet poodle. Here, boy! hi, boy! here! here!"

He held out his hand over the side of the cart, but when the bloodhound jumped at him, he withdrew it very sharply.

"And so they say he has eaten a nigger?" said Mr. Mole.

"Yes, sar."

"A whole nigger?"

"Every morsel, sar."

Mr. Mole smiled superciliously at this.

"He must have a wonderful digestion; for my part, I'd sooner have a nice dinner of shark or toasted crocodile than the tenderest nigger that was ever raised."

"Or a donkey," suggested young Jack.

"Yes, or a donkey."

"Dat looks as if Massa Mole was a cannibal too," said Monday, readily.

Young Jack laughed heartily at this, but at the same time he explained to Monday that he was mistaken in calling Mr. Mole a cannibal because of his preference for donkey, inasmuch as cannibalism meant eating one's own species.

"Dat's it, Massa Jack," said Monday. "Donkey am Mr. Mole's speechy; yah, yah!"

At this moment, a turn in the road brought them in sight of a low hut, at the door of which stood the very man with the gun whose sudden appearance up the road with the bloodhound had so startled the party.

He had returned across the country.

"Hi, Tiger, Tiger!" he called.

The dog ran off immediately.

"Are we near the rocks?" asked young Jack.

"Close by," replied the man with the gun.

"You have a fine dog there."

"I havel and as good as he's handsome."

"Dangerous?"

"Sometimes."

"Bark much?"

"No, he bites."

"Only bites?" said young Jack, laughing.

"I didn't say only bites. He worries and gnaws."

"Would he pull down a man?" asked young Jack.

"Some," replied the cottager, significantly.

"He could tackle a nigger?"

"A nigger!" replied the man, grimly; "a dozen."

This confirmed what Sunday had said.

So Mr. Mole thought that it would be as well to propitiate both dog and master.

So he held out a bit of biscuit at Tiger, who first glanced at his master for permission to take it, and then he jumped up and snapped the biscuit out of Mr. Mole's hand so suddenly that the latter drew back his hand much quicker than he had advanced it.

It was rather curious to remark that, although Sunday had professed to be so frightened of the bloodhound, he got out of the trap and walked past him to the rear of the cottage, where an old woman was engaged grubbing about a bit of garden ground.

"I see you've got Tiger still, Mrs. Grubbins," said Sunday.

The old woman stared hard at Sunday for a minute before she recognized him.

"What, that you Jex?"

"Yes," said Sunday, "dat me, Liz Gubbins."

"What on airth, sar, you dewing here?" ask Mrs. Gubbins.

"Come down our parts agin?"

"Yes, Mrs. Gubbins," replied Sunday, "for a spell."

Then he whistled shrilly once or twice, and the bloodhound Tiger came bounding round to the back of the house.

"Tiger, Tiger!" said Sunday; "don't you know your ole friend?"

The dog sniffed about for a minute and then whinnied in token of recognition, and carressed the negro in a way that would have astonished Mr. Mole, who had heard him described as a sort of natural enemy to colored folks.

"You don't forget, do you, Tiger?"

The bloodhound jumped up and licked and caressed his old friend.

Now when Tiger stood up on his hind legs, he was as tall as Sunday—a truly formidable beast.

"Air you gwine to make a stay about these parts, Caesar?" asked Mrs. Gubbins.

"On'y a while. My boss has to bathe, and so we'll be here every day."

And with this he went back to the front of the cottage, where the party, having refreshed themselves and rewarded Mr. Gubbins, prepared to resume the journey.

"Massa Jack!"

"Yes, Sunday."

"Would you like to hab a lark wid Massa Mole?"

Jack chuckled.

"Can a duck swim?"

"I can tell you how to hab jolly fun, den, Massa Jack, to-morrow morning, if you like."

And when Sunday imparted his scheme to young Jack, and to Monday, it was highly approved of, and it was all arranged.

The next morning, just as they passed the Gubbins' cottage, Tiger came bounding out after them, and again Sunday dropped down at the bottom of the trap in abject terror.

"Oh, golly, Massa Jack," he cried, "keep him off."

"I will, Sunday," said young Jack. "Keep snug."

Tiger barked and jumped up, and Sunday seemed to grow more and more terrified every moment.

Mr. Mole smiled and then laughed outright at poor Sunday's fears.

"How ridiculous to see a man so frightened of a dog," he said.

"Drive it away; Brudder Mole," implored Sunday.

"Dat dog eat us all up; drive him off."

"I will," said Mr. Mole, blandly.

He leaned over the side of the trap and chivied Tiger away.

But the faithful animal bounded after them again, and nearing the cart, he jumped up, snapping and barking in a way that shook Mr. Mole's nerves in spite of his evident desire to appear at ease in his mind.

"Poor Tiger!" he said; "poor dog!"

They reached the rocks, and Mr. Mole picked out the

nook where he left his clothes regularly, and here he hurriedly undressed.

Sunday did not bathe that morning.

Ordinarily he was the first in the water, for he swam like a fish, and cut all kinds of capers in the water, to the amusement of all the party.

He dared not go into the water according to his own account.

"Dat tam Tiger'll come and gobble dis chile up," he said; "I'se 'fraid ob my life."

But this, as you may suppose, was not strictly true.

In fact, no sooner was the tutor in the water, than Sunday glided behind the rocks and softly whistled the bloodhound up.

"You see dem clothes, Tiger?" he said, pointing to Mr. Mole's garments.

Tiger barked in reply.

"You sit on 'em," said Sunday, "and don't you let no one touch 'em."

Tiger barked again.

He understood what was said well enough.

He squatted down upon the garments, and looked about him, as much as to say—

"Who'll come and dislodge me? Come, if you dare."

And it would have been a brave man to attempt it.

Young Jack and Monday were soon out of the water, according to a preconcerted arrangement, and Mr. Mole prepared to follow them, when he perceived Tiger on guard.

"Call that dog off," shouted Mr. Mole.

"Tiger, Tiger!" called young Jack.

But Tiger never moved.

He had received his orders; they knew this well, and it was only Sunday who could have induced him to move.

Sunday, however, was seemingly too frightened to approach the bloodhound.

"Monday," called Mr. Mole, "Monday, do you hear?"

"Yes, sar."

"Drive him off."

"Can't, sar."

"You must."

"Daren't, sar."

"But I want my clothes," cried Mr. Mole.

"You frighten him off, Massa Mole," answered Monday; "Tiger don't care nuffin' for a nigger."

"Nonsense."

"He's torn a poor fellow to bits to-day," said young Jack, "and I don't half like his looks."

"Rubbish!"

"He'd be afraid of you," said young Jack.

Mr. Mole perceived that he was expected to show his prowess, and so, although he scarcely relished the job, he advanced out of the water to within a few yards of the bloodhound, and endeavored to coax him off.

"Good dog, good dog!" cried Mole.

Tiger growled.

Then, as Mr. Mole drew nearer, he snarled, snapped, and showed his fangs.

And such fangs, too.

Mole dashed back into the water as though he was shot.

"Can't anybody get him off?" said Mr. Mole. "I'm getting the shivers and want to come out."

No one could, however, induce Tiger to move from his post.

Isaac Mole, in sheer despair, approached the dog once more, for he had formed the somewhat rash resolve to drive him away. But oh, for his rashness!

Alas! for his resolve!

He tried to persuade the bloodhound to quit his post, but he little knew Tiger's sense of discipline.

It would have been as easy to move one of the pyramids of Egypt as to dislodge the bloodhound.

"Here, Bijou!" said Mr. Mole, coaxingly. "Hi, Towzer! Good dog—beast! you wont move, eh?—here—st—st—st!"

He held an imaginary something in his hand which he expected Tiger to take for a tempting morsel of food.

Tiger looked, and even sniffed, but no more.

Even his sniff was scornful.

Tiger was immovable.

"Jack, my dear boy where are you? Do please go and tell Mrs. Mole to bring me some clothes to put on."

No answer came from Jack.

"You beast!" said Mole, turning his attention once more to the dog; "I wish I had a gun or a pistol, I'd brain you—or I'd try at it—you beast! Oh, if I could only get my boot! It is very hard to be crippling one's solitary foot while one's solitary boot is under the custody of a notorious man-eater! Oh! oh! my poor foot!"

He was on the shingles, and the truth was that they crippled him, in spite of his having a stick to help him along, and just as he had got unusually vituperative, a nubby pebble mangled his little toe cruelly.

"Oh! confound the dog! The beast is inaccessible to argument—it's as bootless as I am."

"Oh, that's a joke," cried young Jack, who was within hearing.

"You've got your stick, Mr. Mole," shouted young Jack; "why don't you drop into him with it?—you'd drive him off."

"It's all very well to say why? I'd precious soon show him if I had my clothes on."

"He won't hurt you much, I dare say," said young Jack.

"Him not gnaw you a lot," said Monday; "you too thin and gristly, Massa Mole."

"Yah! yah!" cried Sunday.

Now, Mr. Mole resolved to recover his boot at all hazards.

With that he could mount the shingles fearlessly, he thought. So he made an effort.

Creeping up, he took his stick by the wet end and made a dash at the boot with the crook.

"Uh—wah!" snarled Tiger, showing such fangs.

With more haste than grace Mr. Mole retreated.

Over he went down the beach head first.

And then, as he rose to the surface, he was spitting and spluttering.

"He's got it dis time," laughed Sunday.

"Shipped a lot," said young Jack.

"Capital physic," shouted Monday. "You hab water first and rum when you get home Massa Mole."

Isaac Mole was outraged.

He arose majestically, and blew away his long, straggling, damp locks, which tickled his purple nose.

Thoughts of dire vengeance filled the tutor's breast.

"If I only had you in London for an hour," he said, taking his stick at Tiger, "I'd teach you! They should soon find your bloated corpus floating gracefully on the bosom of old Father Thames. A nice bit of liver, savored with a nice little something from the chemist's, should soon wind up your clock, you beast!"

He worked himself up into a towering rage, and was just going to throw his stick at the faithful bloodhound, when he thought better of it.

His stick was a crutch. His stick might yet have to serve him as a weapon of defence.

Ha! A brilliant thought! His leg!

That wooden member was of little use momentarily, so Mr. Mole, balancing himself dexterously for a while on his natural leg, unscrewed his artificial limb.

"Now you shall have it!" he muttered between his set teeth.

He meant it.

Indeed, if Tiger only got half what Mr. Mole meant him to have, Tiger's days were indeed numbered.

Isaac Mole poised the wooden leg in his hand.

"Now for it," said the tutor. "one, two—I don't care where I hit, for damme, I can't get out of the water without my clothes—three!"

The wooden leg flew straight at the mark.

Yes, and what's more, it might have landed poor Tiger heavily, had he not at that identical moment bent his noble head to take a sniff at a diminutive crab, which had just excited his curiosity by crawling past his paws.

"Missed!"

"Missed!"

The word was echoed from behind the rocks.

Young Jack, Monday and Sunday had seen it all. Despair!

And the most humiliating part of the business was that Tiger bent his noble head and only sniffed, and gazed occasionally at the unfortunate Isaac Mole with the same stolid indifference.

"A-chew!—dear me!" exclaimed the tutor. "I know I shall catch my death of cold, Oh, will no one fetch Mrs. Mole?"

It was high time for the spectators to interfere.

So Mr. Mole's pupil took the initiative.

"Get Mr. Mole some other clothes," said young Jack; "do you hear, Sunday?"

"Yes, sar."

The darkey disappeared, and presently he brought some clothes bundled up under his arms, and Mr. Mole crawled ashore a few yards off his own clothes.

"Jack, my dear boy, it is very kind of you, but cannot some of you drive the brute away? That animal is evidently a very dangerous one."

"He is."

"Be quick with my clothes. Anything to get back in, for if I catch cold, I had much better have stopped away altogether."

He took up one of the garments and shook it out.

And then he gave a cry of amazement.

"What is this? There's some mistake."

"A mistake?" said young Jack.

"What mistake?"

"This is an old woman's gown"

"No matter," cried young Jack, "you will look well in anything, sir."

"Dat's all I could get," said Sunday. "Mother Gubbins lent it for Massa Mole. She ain't got no other, and ole Gubbins ain't at home."

"Confound old Gubbins!" exclaimed Mr. Mole; "I can never go along dressed up like that."

"Then don't dress, sar," suggested Sunday; "come along with no clothes."

"Impossible!"

"You must."

"Ridiculous!" said Mr. Mole. "Besides, consider—"

"Then you must drive Tiger away; I can't do it."

"Dear me, dear me," said the tutor, in considerable distress, "this is very unpleasant."

"Is it, sir?"

"Sunday, or you, Monday, my dear friend, kindly lend me your clothes, and take my place in the water."

"Not if him knows it, sar," cried Monday, with a grin; "dis child am bery well with his clothes on. You better go home in de old woman's gown; you look a bery fine gal."

"What, in the gown?"

"Yes, sar."

"Nonsense."

"Shall we go on, sir?" asked young Jack, slyly, "and tell the old woman you don't want her clothes?"

"No, no," replied Mr. Mole, quickly; "I'd better go home in her old gown than nothing."

And so he began to dress.

When once they got him into the gown the rest was comparatively easy.

There was a bonnet of white straw, and of that shape which our grandmothers knew as the "coal scuttle," and a shawl as well.

And in this eccentric garb Mr. Mole trotted back to the trap, while his companions were convulsed with laughter.

"Massa Mole makes a lubly gal," said Monday, with a grin; "on'y it's a pity dat his petticoats ain't longer, for he looks like one ob dem young gals what dances at the theayter."

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHEREIN MR. MOLE MORTALLY OFFENDS A TERRIBLE TANKER.

MR. MOLE'S adventure at the bath with the dog abruptly terminated his stay there.

Next morning Mr. Mole received notice that a letter of importance was waiting for him at the Harkaways' residence in New York.

Mr. Mole was glad enough to depart, as he had been thinking and dreaming ever since that he had been torn to pieces by the man-eating dog, Tiger.

On arriving at New York with young Jack, they learned some highly interesting news from their friends.

After that desperate battle of the giants, the party had paid another visit to the woods to see if the vanquished Toro's body was still there.

But judge of their astonishment when they found that the body had disappeared.

There could be but one way of accounting for this.

The ex-brigand's comrades had carried it off. They learned also, to their intense disappointment and disgust, that the rest of the Bowery gang had escaped in the vessel commanded by Captain Clemmans. But whither bound?

"I understand their ship has sailed for the China Seas," said the detective, entering at that moment, "but we'll have them."

Harkaway handed Mr. Mole his letter.

When he had scanned it down once, he cried—"Oh, my!"

"Oh, yours!" said Harvey.

"Oh, his!" said young Jack.

"I beg you will not conjugate in such loud tones," said Mr. Mole, smiling complacently. "This letter is an official document. It is from one of the English consuls in China. I am advised of the melancholy death of the gentleman to whom I disposed of my property there."

"The tea plantation?" asked Dick Harvey.

"Yes. The gentleman has made me his heir," replied Mr. Mole.

"Good gracious!"

"Wish you joy."

"Long life to Mr. Mole."

Mr. Mole was silent.

His brow grew cloudy.

"It is accompanied by a certain condition."

"What?"

"That I should go and live on the property."

"Why not?"

"I should have to go and leave you," said Mr. Mole.

"But you cannot refuse your property."

"I would, sooner than leave you."

Mr. Mole was quite moved as he spoke, and his manner told them as plainly as words could that in spite of all his eccentricities, he was warmly attached to the Harkaways.

"Well," said Harkaway the elder, "we shall have to go with you, Mr. Mole."

"Where?"

"To China."

"What!"

"I mean it," said Harkaway. "We can't let you miss your chances for our sakes. So, if you go, why, we will all go together. We do not fear meeting the Bowery gang even there."

The arrangement was hastily made. But they adhered to it, as you will see later on.

Meanwhile, Mr. Mole had been somewhat disturbed in his mind, by what he had heard, for he did not wish ever to hear more of Hunston's gang.

"Did you say China, Mr. Pike?" he asked.

"I did."

"Are you sure that is the real destination of these robbers and murderers?"

"As sure as one can well be. I have the best of information on that point."

Isaac Mole was so startled by the singularity of the coincidence, that he could not get over it.

"Most extraordinary—marvellous, sir—simply marvellous, I call it."

"What is, sir?" demanded Harkaway.

"That the Bowery gang should have shipped for the very part that we are going to."

Young Jack looked anything but pleased.

"I am not glad to hear that," he said. "I do not wish to see them again. But are you sure?"

"We have Mr. Pike's word for it."

"Come, Mr. Pike," said Harkaway, "we must to business." So they departed, leaving young Jack alone with Mr. Mole.

"Well, sir," said Jack, "if we should meet the gang, you will have a chance of showing once more your great courage, for, you know, in the fight with Toro you had not a fair chance, sir."

"Jack, my dear boy," retorted Mr. Mole, promptly, "do not poke your fun at your venerable friend and preceptor."

"Fun, sir?" exclaimed Jack.

"You are a pretty innocent," said Mr. Mole. "So none of your tricks upon travelers, or if I don't wig you, my name is not—"

"They Mole

Was a swikey ole soul,

And a swikey ole soul was he,"

sang Monday just outside the window at this precise instant.

Young Jack heard it and was ready to split his sides with laughter.

"The lazy, idle, insolent black thief!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, indignantly. "He's actually standing under the window, yelling his trash."

"Very wrong," said young Jack.

"Wrong! I'll teach him."

A plan of speedy vengeance had flashed across Mr. Mole's mind.

Seizing a large water bottle which stood in the center of the table, he rushed to the window, and stretching forth his arm, emptied the water—as he thought—upon the darkey's devoted head.

At the self-same moment, Dick Harvey might have been seen to glide out of the house.

Suddenly a loud outcry arose beneath, and a voice in indignation was heard to lift itself.

"Darn my feathers, if I only had the skunk what

hev' turned the tap on my ringulets, I'd lift his hair—some."

Mr. Mole started.

"What can that be?" he asked.

"I'll see," replied young Jack, with alacrity.

He opened the window and looked out, for he strongly suspected there was some fun on.

Yes, there was Harvey busily engaged with Monday, who caught a little of the water—very little, by the way—and they were laughing in anticipation over some scheme which Harvey was proposing.

"What's the matter?" called out young Jack.

"Hush, Jack, hush!" said Mr. Mole. "What is the use of taking any notice?"

"It's all very fine, sir," said young Jack, turning round to Mr. Mole, and looking very frightened, "but you have thrown the water over a gentleman. He looks very fierce; he has two revolvers and a bowie knife stuck in his belt, and is coming this way."

"Good gracious me!" ejaculated Mr. Mole, "is it possible?"

"It is possible. Come and see for yourself," said young Jack.

"No, no," said Mr. Mole, very much alarmed. "Come away, Jack."

Just then the same irate voice which had been heard before exclaimed:

"Was that you, my bleating babe?"

"No, sir, it was Mr. Mole."

"Hold your tongue, Jack," said the tutor, in alarm. "Do you want to make a disturbance?"

"No, sir; but he thought it was me."

"Yew, was it?" repeated the voice below.

"No, Mr. Mole, and he is up here, sir, with the water bottle in his hand."

"Mole! Darn Mole! I'll 'Mole' him!"

"How dare you, Jack?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, in a whisper of alarm.

"Say, my youthful stranger," called out the indignant unseem below, "you can pass the work that Solomon Brick is coming up to settle matters right away, and that if I don't slice his darned liver in half a whittle, he may jest call me the milkiest coon in the Union."

"Dear me, dear me!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "I fear there has been some great mistake."

"Rather!"

"These Americans are very violent, too, I have heard."

"Very."

"Dear, dear! how very unfortunate."

"More than unfortunate," said young Jack. "He's coming up. Now is the time to show your native-born courage, sir."

"But I don't want to show my native-born courage, Jack, at this moment."

"Well, sir, he is coming up."

"Never!" cried Mr. Mole, now thoroughly alarmed.

At the very instant came a loud knock at the door.

"Come in," cried young Jack.

"No, no," cried Mr. Mole, stamping hurriedly across the room, and locking the door. "Who's there?"

"Me, siree."

"Who's that?"

"Solomon Brick."

Mr. Mole's countenance fell.

"I've come to see Mole, the skunk that dared to throw water over me," said the irate Brick, with the strongest nasal twang that Mr. Mole had ever heard. "I've come jest to wind up his clock right away—that's so. Open the door."

"I can't," answered Mr. Mole, in great confusion.

"We're out."

"What?"

"We're invisible," stammered Mr. Mole; "we're dressing—in fact, we are in bed, and—we're taking a bath."

"That's high pressure some," returned Mr. Solomon Brick through the keyhole. "You Britishers pile it on considerable."

"We do—we do," answered Mr. Mole, eagerly.

"Right, sires, bob; you contrive to do a few things at once."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, Mole, I'll wait for you. I'll give you five minutes, and I'll kill time sharpening up my prodder for your ribs."

"Oh!" cried poor Mole, "his prodder for my ribs."

"It'll go through you better," continued the fire-eater outside.

"Blood-thirsty monster!" groaned poor Mr. Mole.

"Mr. Mole says you are a blood-thirsty monster, sir," cried Jack through the keyhole.

"Yes, I am that, and I'll load my six-shooter ready for him."

"Ruffian!" chattered Mole, from between his teeth.

"Now, old boss, I give you two minutes more, and then I'll pop the muzzle of my barker to the keyhole, and bust the lock off; and then I'll come in with my bowie out, and carve away merrily at your old carcass."

Mr. Mole staggered a little, and caught at the chimney for support.

He felt that he was lost.

"Carve away at my old carcass!" exclaimed Mole. "Oh, horror!"

This person, calling himself Mr. Solomon Brick, was evidently the typical Yankee rowdy that he had read of in English books.

"Yes, sir," said young Jack, "I think he means it. Can I give any message to Mrs. Mole for you, sir, before you are carved up?"

"No, Jack, my dear boy; I would like to deliver the message myself to my dear wife. Cannot I escape, Jack, for the fact is, I don't feel well?"

"There is no way to escape, sir; you had better meet your fate like a man."

"I should prefer it some other day, Jack," cried Mole, tremblingly; "At the present moment I am not quite ready to be carved up; the operation must be most unpleasant."

Mole was conscious of having mortally offended and insulted an out-and-out Yankee rowdy, and he felt that his life was not worth an hour's purchase.

Had Isaac Mole been an artist, his fancy sketch would have shown a long, thin man, with a square lower jaw, and a tuft on the chin, and a broad-brimmed conical hat.

Had he sketched Dick Harvey, it would have borne a life-like resemblance to Solomon Brick.

And this is not to be wondered at, seeing that Dick Harvey and Solomon Brick were one and the same.

"Now, siree," said the fire-eater, "my patience is at an end, and I guess I'm gwine to blaze away." Mole groaned.

"I'll just count out three," pursued the irascible Solomon. "Now, oncet, twicet, and—"

"Stop, stop!" cried Mr. Mole; "don't be rash, sir, I beg. I'll have the door opened."

"Oh, you will?"

"Yes."

"Then no more palaver, or I'll see tew it myself, anyhow."

"Restrain your ferocity, my dear sir," said poor Mole.

"Don't 'My dear sir' me, darn you—o—"

"I cannot let you in just yet."

"Why, you—you ring-tailed roarer!"

"Oh! my!"

"You—you all-fired snorter!"

"How dreadful to be called such awful names."

"Open the door."

"I can't sir, I assure you. Mrs. Mole is dressing."

"What's that to do with me? Put Mother Mole into bed while we carve away at each other."

"What a sanguinary villain," gasped Mole.

"And if your old woman can't stand fire, let her plug up her ears with cotton wool while we blaze away. She can cover over her head, if she don't like to see your ruby spilt; but, damme! I'll make you dance."

It was piteous indeed to behold poor Mr. Mole.

He was as pale as death; the color had fled from his lips, which were growing blue.

"Remember, sir, I am a married man," cried Mole.

"Serve you right, for making a darned fool of your self," shouted the fire-eater.

Young Jack was laughing inwardly.

"I'll bust it open!" exclaimed the wrathful Brick outside.

A mighty thump, that threatened to shiver the panels, wound up this fierce speech.

Mr. Mole had grown desperate by this time.

So he stepped up to the door, and stilled the chattering of his teeth by a tremendous effort.

"If you will only curb your violence," he said, in his most dignified manner, "and make known your desires, I will endeavor to meet them."

"I'll 'desires' you," retorted Brick, through the keyhole.

"What do you want?"

"To slice your darned liver."

Mole shivered.

"If you have been offended, sir—" he began.

"Offended? Outraged, you mealy-faced cuss!"

"I am ready to make an ample apology."

"Won't have it."

"What more can a man do?" asked poor Mole, in despair.

"Come out and draw iron," yelled Solomon Brick; "come out and get catawampously chewed up."

"Chawed up; dear, dear, whatever is that? Is it worse than being carved up?"

"Bust, spifflicated, and I'll be your buster, your spifflicator; come out."

"Dear, dear me, how violent. What a fury."

"If you've got the pluck of a maiding gal, come out and get goss."

"Whatever is a maiding gal?" exclaimed Mr. Mole, fairly puzzled.

"He wants you to fight him, sir. Had you not better have it over at once?"

"Ugh! A duel?"

"Of course."

"Put him off, then."

"Well, sir?"

"Mr. Mole says," replied young Jack at the door, "that he'll be very glad to meet you—"

"No, no!"

"If you'll name your time and weapons."

"No, no, no!" cried Mr. Mole, in an agonized whisper.

"Time now," retorted the fierce Solomon Brick through the keyhole; "nothing like the present. Weapons, anything he likes, from toothpicks to blunderbusses, popguns to forty-eight pounders, and he may consider me there; that's so."

"I'll never fight, Jack," groaned Isaac Mole, now thoroughly lost to a proper sense of his dignity before his pupil.

"You must, sir."

"Well is he ready? Shall I send some one to order his coffin? I don't mind paying for it."

"Well, sir, Mr. Mole says that he is not ready for his coffin, and he couldn't fight now as he's too busy," answered young Jack, "and he's got a bad toothache, and he don't feel well; but he'll be glad to accommodate you—"

"Say next Tuesday week," suggested Mr. Mole.

"To-morrow," said young Jack.

"To-morrow, then," answered Mr. Brick. "What time?"

"Six."

"In the morning?"

"Yes."

"Don't be so rash," said Mr. Mole, in a whisper; "say evening."

"Evening," repeated young Jack aloud.

"Very good; I'll be here and conduct you to a place where you can chop away like fun for an hour or two, and say!"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll hev a barrer with me to wheel off what is left of Mole; d'ye hear?"

And then they heard the sounds of Mr. Solomon Brick's retreating footsteps.

Isaac Mole drew a long breath of relief at this.

"Thank goodness that that man-monster has left," said he. "By six to-morrow evening I hope to be a long way on the road to Cuba."

Mr. Mole hurried the preparations for their departure in a feverish manner, and by noon next day the whole of the Harkaway party, Jefferson, Magog Brand, Harry Girdwood, and the two English detectives, were on their way to Mr. Mole's tea plantation in the Celestial Empire, via that hotbed of revolution—the Island of Cuba.

CHAPTER XXX.

MEME ON BOARD—JACK AT HIS OLD TRICKS—MOLE-HUNTING.

"Her bowsprit points to Cuba,
The coast lies far behind."

Young Mr. Mole, who was quite elated at the idea of being once more afloat, and having escaped the fire-eating Brick. "This reminds me, Jack, of my strange adventures with a slaver, that I fell in with once when I was on my travels."

"Dear me, sir!" exclaimed his pupil, "a slaver?"

"Yes, Jack."

"Did you ever trade in slaves?"

"I'm afraid I did."

"You were a desperate character then, sir?"

"I think I was, Jack," answered Mr. Mole; "in fact, my dear boy, I am afraid that I was a deuce of a fire-eater when young."

"How strange. You have changed now, sir."

"It is strange."

"Yes, sir," said young Jack, reflectively. "It is by the same rule, I suppose, that the prettiest babies grow up the ugliest men and women, at times."

"And vice versa," added his tutor, with a modest cough. "I have heard my parents remark that I was far from comely in my infancy."

"Which accounts for your splendid appearance now, sir."

"Precisely. I was too fiery in my youth, Jack, far too fiery; and I was given to resent every offence in a way that a man ought really not to. I was a dare-devil, you see, a high-spirited dashing young blade, Jack; in fact, a species of—of—"

"Solomon Brick," suggested his pupil.

"Not quite so misguided, I might almost say so mad; but I was almost as desperate if I had any real offense to resent."

"He was very alarming, sir."

"He was very absurd, Jack, if you mean that," he replied.

"He frightened you dreadfully, sir."

"Frightened me?" echoed Mr. Mole. "Don't talk nonsense, Jack."

"Do you mean that you were not frightened, sir?"

"Of course not, Jack. The fact is, as I was about leaving America, I did not wish to have the poor fellow's blood on my hands."

"Then you were not frightened?" asked Jack.

"No, Jack; and I am glad I did not chastise that misguided man for his rudeness, though it quite upset me."

"I thought once you had got the captain aboard, sir."

"The captain aboard!" iterated Mr. Mole. "What captain?"

"Captain Funk," answered young Jack demurely.

And without waiting to watch the effect of his speech upon his tutor, young Jack turned upon his heel, and strode aft in search of Dick Harvey.

Dick was engaged in a chat with Dick Harkaway, senior.

"I say, Mr. Harvey," said young Jack, "we shall have to bring Mr. Solomon Brick to the fore again."

Harvey grinned.

"What for, Jack?"

"Oh, he's going it wildly."

"Mr. Mole?"

"Yes."

"Bragging?"

"Worse than ever."

"Very well, then, we'll physic him," said Dick Harvey.

So they let Harkaway into the secret, and they got up a notable scheme between them; for young Jack's father had never got over his old predilection for a practical joke of any kind, and a spree with Isaac Mole—so long as it was not carried too far—was of all things in the world just to his taste.

This just helped them to carry out their joke.

Harkaway loved fun now as much as ever, and into this present scheme he entered heart and soul.

* * * *

"Mr. Mole," said Jack Harkaway, senior, a little later on, "is there any foundation for what the captain of this ship has been telling me?"

"If I only knew, my dear Harkaway," said Mr. Mole, with a very supercilious smile, "what Captain Disher had been telling you, I might be able to hazard a reply."

"You shall know at once, sir," replied Harkaway. "It relates to a gentleman you offended—a Mr. Solomon Brick."

Mr. Mole started.

"Has Captain Disher been speaking to you of that insolent person?"

"Then there is some truth in it?"

"I don't know what you may understand by that, Harkaway. There was a person calling himself Solomon Brick—odious name—who presumed to be very insolent to me, and whom I should certainly have punished, had our hurried departure—"

"That's it, then. Good Heaven, my dear old friend."

"Don't excite yourself, Harkaway."

"I do not—I do not, Mr. Mole; only I can't say how glad I am that this man did not goad you on to rashness."

"Ahem!"

"That your hands are free from the stain of blood."

"True," returned the tutor, pompously, "he was very provoking, and, although I am not given to take offense

too readily, I must say that I was sorely tempted to give him a lesson."

"You were?"

"Yes."

"You don't mean it," said Harkaway, apparently quite staggered by the tutor's display of courage.

"Indeed, I do."

"And would you really like to meet him?"

"Such," replied Mr. Mole, complacently—"such is my dearest wish. In point of fact, once let me finish the business which I have now on hand, and I shall, without loss of time, make a point of seeking out Mr. Solomon Brick, and either make him eat his words and humbly apologize, or—"

"Or what?"

"Or he shall account to me for his violent conduct with sword and pistol."

And Mr. Mole, looking as fierce as a maggot, strode up and down a la militaire.

To look upon Isaac Mole just then, you would have thought him the most desperate duellist that the fighting world could produce.

Harkaway appeared to be shocked.

"Oh, Mr. Mole, Mr. Mole!" he said, with a long-drawn sigh.

"What, Jack?"

"I am so sorry to see you betray such ferocity."

"One cannot help one's nature, Harkaway. You know I was always brave."

"True, but still I had hopes of passing a time of tranquillity and calm enjoyment on our voyage out."

"And so we shall."

"Not if you betray such bloodthirsty instincts."

Mr. Mole was in positive ecstasy at this.

Not only had he got out of a very difficult position with considerable skill, but he had very easily acquired a reputation for fierceness with the most sceptical of his friends.

"Do not fear for me, my dear Harkaway," he said. "As fierce and warlike as I may be in presence of the enemy, I am a very lamb in the time of peace."

Harkaway shook his head doubtfully.

"There will be bloodshed yet on board, I fear."

"What do you mean?" asked Mr. Mole, as though he had not heard aright.

"If you insist on molesting this man."

"Don't be weak and silly, Harkaway! Once for all, you will find me calm and peaceably-disposed enough here. Only once free from this job, I will get you to bear a message for me to this insolent rowdy."

"I?"

"Yes, you."

"I should feel flattered at being chosen for your second, sir," said Harkaway, "but the dread of anything happening to you—"

Mr. Mole winced.

It gave him a turn to think what might have happened to him had he not managed to put off that bloodthirsty Yankee, Solomon Brick.

At the same time he mentally vowed never to set foot in New York city again until he had heard of Mr. Solomon Brick's demise.

But a startler was in reserve for poor Isaac Mole.

"Mr. Mole," said Harkaway, in a funereal voice, "I can't refuse you."

"Of course not."

"No. My respect for you, my dear old friend, forbids that; but oh! I cannot describe to you my anguish when I reflect in how short a time it may be my wretched lot to see you stretched at my feet."

"What!"

"Bathed in your own gore."

"Harkaway, don't talk such nonsense. Your words are more forcible than pleasant."

"Ah, you make light of it, sir," said Harkaway. "You know not fear, but I—I—when I think that another hour may see you lifeless."

Mr. Mole pricked up his ears.

Another hour!

Surely there was some mistake.

"Are you aware, Harkaway, that it will be months before this voyage will be settled, and all the work in hand?"

"Yes; but I suppose you mean me to carry your message at once."

"At once? How? Whatever do you mean, Harkaway?"

"Is it possible, Mr. Mole, that you can be unaware of his presence on board?"

"Whose?"

"Why, whose but Solomon Brick's, that dreadful man who is now thirsting for your blood!"

Had Mr. Mole suddenly sat down upon a needle, he could not have started more spasmodically. The color forsook his cheek.

He held himself steady by the nearest projection, and stared wildly at Harkaway.

"Do you mean that he, Solomon Brick, is here, Harkaway?"

"Yes."

"On board?"

"Yes."

"Have you seen him?"

"No, but the captain is full of it. Mr. Brick has paid his fare to Cuba solely with the idea of following you."

"Gracious!"

"He has sworn to have your blood; in fact your life."

"The villain!"

"And no doubt he'll keep his word, for Captain Disher tells me his skill with the bowie-knife is something marvellous, and that he is never satisfied until he cuts his enemy into mincemeat; while, as for shooting, he can do things that look more like conjuring tricks than pistol practice."

Mr. Mole shivered.

He hadn't a word to say for himself now.

It was so sudden—so awful.

Such a change from the calm, delightful feeling of satisfaction which he had experienced in having escaped his danger, that he was utterly dumbfounded.

"Well, Mr. Mole," said Harkaway, "since I see you so resolved, I may as well go and carry your message."

He moved a step.

But Mr. Mole detained him.

"Stop a moment—"

"What is it?" cried Jack.

"Why," said Mr. Mole, grasping Jack's hand, "my dear Harkaway, I am thinking that at my time of life, perhaps it would be advisable to turn my quarrel over to a younger man, for instance, my dear old pupil. You may, if you like, take my place, and fight this dreadful man-eater for me."

"No," cried Harkaway. "I will not rob you of the honor of ridding the world of this horrid villain, and I had better lose no time; for if we're not sharp, the challenge will come from him, and since you are so fiercely resolved, let us take it out of him altogether."

"One moment, Harkaway," gasped the tutor.

"Yes, sir."

"This is so sudden, and so unexpected."

"But not disagreeable to you, I suppose?"

"Of course not—but—"

"All right, sir," said Harkaway, cheerfully, "we'll talk it over when I have settled the particulars. Meanwhile, let us be first with our message, or—"

"Mr. Mole," said one of the crew, stepping up at this moment.

"Yes."

"Mr. Solomon Brick wants to see you on urgent business that can't be put off; he seems to have a lot of powder and shot, and a sharp knife or two, sir, he says; and he's coming to you right away."

Mr. Mole gave a cry—a species of gasp—and hobbled away at a rate that rather astonished his friends.

In his hurry he tumbled head first down the steps, shut himself in his cabin, and did not appear for the next two days.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE ISLAND OF CUBA—STARTLING NEWS.

MR. MOLE became a regular amusement for the whole ship.

He called for food and drink to be placed outside his door day by day, being much afraid to come on deck.

But when they neared the coast of Cuba they had other matters to distract their attention, and the tutor got a rest.

A Spanish cruiser overhauled them, and a rigorous examination was made of their papers and cargo.

The reason of this harsh proceeding was patent to all.

The insurgents of Cuba got supplies of arms and ammunition from all quarters.

The authorities had their floating spies about in all directions, and sometimes they succeeded in bagging a delinquent—catching him in the act. And when they did, it went hard with him at last.

They issued proclamations threatening all blockade-runners with death in the event of their capture red-handed.

Captain Disher remonstrated to the Spanish cruiser in language more plain than polite.

"We sail under a flag that won't stand much, senior," he said, pointing significantly to the stars and stripes floating about in the breeze; "so let me recommend that to your polite consideration before you go too far."

"I can accept the full responsibility for my actions," replied the Spanish commander, with gravity. "You are free to depart now, but I warn your passengers that any one landing runs very considerable risks. These are serious times, and we can't well spend precious moments over matters of form and ceremony."

They learnt something more interesting than this.

More interesting, that is, to the Harkaways.

The Spanish cruiser had the day previously made an important capture.

A vessel carrying arms for the insurgents, together with other goods contraband of war, had been taken.

A very important capture indeed it was considered.

Amongst the prisoners, they counted Captain Clemmans, one of the most serious and most successful blockade runners, and his crew, there was every reason to believe, was simply a body of recruits for the revolutionists.

"And what will be done with the men?" questioned Captain Disher, in Harkaway's hearing.

The Spanish officers smiled significantly at the question.

"What has been done with them, you mean, captain?"

"Well, has been done, then?"

"Shot."

"Never!"

"Such is the case," replied the officer, gravely; "and now judge if you are fortunate in having nothing in your cargo which calls forth any suspicions concerning you."

Later information confirmed what this officer had said.

A number of prisoners were taken, and after a hurried mockery of a trial, they were placed against a wall and shot down mercilessly.

Harkaway was not a little startled by what he heard, as you may suppose.

"Can you give me a list of names of the parties shot?"

"From the 'Independence?'" asked the officer.

"Yes."

"Here is the official list."

The Spaniard produced a list of names from his pocket, and handed it to Harkaway.

He hurriedly scanned them down.

"Richard Barkley, John Clemmans, Fritz Von Koppenhaagen, Juan Ostani, Robert Emmerson, Francis Warburton."

"Is it possible," said Harkaway, meditatively, "that this can be the end of the villains who have caused us so much trouble and bother?"

"Did you know any of the murdered men?" inquired the captain, who stood near Harkaway.

"Murdered men!" iterated the Spanish officer, indignantly. "They were men deserving of death."

"I knew several of them," replied Harkaway. "It is certain that they merited their fates. But can it really be true that Toro, Hunston, and Emmerson are amongst the slain?"

After some little conversation, the Spanish officer suggested that the best way to ascertain whether the men executed were really those our hero had known, would be to inquire of the consul, who would be able to furnish him with full descriptions.

So Jack Harkaway, the elder and his friend Dick Harvey went ashore in a boat for the purpose of visiting the British consul.

They were challenged by the sentries as they landed. But they were fortunately accompanied by the Spanish revenue officer, whose presence was a guarantee for them.

Once on shore, they were soon conducted to the British consulate.

Harkaway had no difficulty in making himself known.

"I am very pleased," said the consul, "to make your acquaintance, for I have many things to tell you."

"Indeed, sir," said Harkaway, in some surprise.

"It concerns your late agent."

"Don Jose?"

"Poor Don Jose! He was a personal friend of mine, and his death caused me sorrow and trouble in vainly endeavoring to unravel the mystery connected with his death."

"Mystery?"

"Yes."

"What mystery?"

"His continued praises of your father's great liberality excited the cupidity of an adventurer called—or calling himself—Juan Ostani."

"Then how came Don Jose to name Ostani as his successor?"

"It was your father who did that," said the consul.

Harkaway shook his head rather seriously.

"It is a forgery, then."

"Are you sure?"

"Certain, for I know positively that my father was always opposed to this Ostani."

"Then," said the consul, "I can see it all now. This supplies the only link wanting to complete the chain of evidence I have been fitting together. Don Jose, your father's agent, died in a way that convinced me there had been foul play, and Ostani produced letters appointing him successor. From the first moment that I saw that man I was prejudiced against him. He speedily became woefully unpopular with everyone, and it began to be whispered about that he was concerned in the political intrigues which led to the civil war."

"Indeed!"

"It has since transpired that he was in the pay of both sides, and that he played false to both."

"The villain!"

"Presently it grew too hot for him here, and he one fine day disappeared from the scene, bearing off a considerable amount of property with which he had been entrusted."

"How is it that he did not get into trouble with your hot-headed islanders?"

"Why, in some measure his physical weakness protected him."

"How? Was he deformed or very aged?"

"Neither. He was a well-grown man, but he had only one arm."

Jack looked up.

"One arm?"

"Yes."

"That is a singular coincidence!" he said. "My greatest enemy is a one-armed man. Describe this Ostani."

"He was rather tall, sallow-faced, with a lowering brow and forbidding glance—an objectionable man, in fact."

"The very man!" exclaimed Jack Harkaway, jumping up.

The consul looked up in great surprise.

"Your Juan Ostani," continued Harkaway, "has been taken prisoner, and, as I have been given to understand, shot yesterday."

"Good Heaven!"

Harkaway continued:

"He was taken here with others on board a vessel carrying arms to the insurgents. Juan Ostani is an Englishman, I am sorry to say, and his real name is Hunston."

CHAPTER XXXII.

"WHO GOES THERE?"—AN ADVENTURE AND AN ARREST.

THE consul rang, and a servant appeared.

"Can you give me the names of the crew and passengers of the 'Independence' who were shot?" he asked.

"Two men only were shot."

"But I heard that they were all condemned."

"It is true, sir, but they were mostly respited."

"Give me the names of the two who were shot."

"One was Joachim Hertz, the other was called Salvati."

"Stay while I write a letter to the governor of the prison. I wish to see one of the prisoners."

"The rest of them have been set at liberty."

"Never!"

"Pardon, your excellency, it is the truth."

"Confound it!" ejaculated the consul. "Then a great scoundrel has been set loose again to prey upon society at large."

Further inquiries corroborated this statement.

Hunston had, with his own extraordinary luck, again escaped the most terrible danger he ever ran.

He had actually been taken red-handed by the outraged authorities, who did not scruple to take the lives of men who were comparatively innocent, and yet he had got off.

The only condition imposed upon him was that he should leave the island at once.

This he and his companions in infamy readily promised to do.

The consul rang again, and sent for a native clerk, to

whom he gave some directions in Spanish and dismissed him.

Harkaway and Harvey only overheard the name of Ostani, and could understand no more.

"I have given my clerk instructions" explained the consul, "to write out two or three copies of an announcement concerning Ostani, or Hunston, as you call him—offering a reward for his capture."

"But he has been set at liberty."

"He was set free by the Spanish authorities over the other business. His presence was unknown to those he had injured during his residence at Havana and other parts of the island. I shall place the notices in the way of people who I know have been deeply injured by Ostani, and believe me, if you will, they are sure to make such a hubbub that his escape from the island is next to an impossibility."

"And if he is caught?"

"Leave the rest to me," said the consul, nodding significantly.

They then left with the intention of calling the next day.

They strolled toward the shore for the purpose of going on board again, and on their way dropped into a cafe.

Here they called for something, and sat down to refresh in a shady part of the place.

"What do you think of Cuba, Dick?" asked Harkaway.

"Lovely place."

"And the people?"

Dick replied with a shrug.

"Scarcely know."

"They are evidently a discontented, foolish lot," said Harkaway.

"Hush!"

"What's the matter?"

"We are being watched."

"By whom?"

"That evil-eyed black-muzzled-looking fellow behind there."

"Do you think so?"

"I am sure of it."

"What can their purpose be in spying us?"

"Strangers are looked upon with suspicion in these troublesome times, and we are liable to be arrested for nothing, or next to nothing."

"They would never dare."

Dick laughed.

"You would soon see whether they dared or not. They would have no more compunction about tying our arms behind us, putting us against a wall, and shooting us down, than they would of drowning a kitten. These dons are nothing if not bloodthirsty."

Now barely were those words uttered when a man glided from close behind Harkaway.

He had not missed a word.

The shrubs had concealed him from view, and he had contrived to play the spy there with a vengeance.

Harkaway and Dick rose to stretch their legs a bit, and strolled out of the garden.

Now, barely were their backs turned when the two men who were watching them made signs of significance to each other, and followed closely upon their heels.

* * * * *

"Do you know, Jack," said Harvey, "what I should like to do?"

"I don't know," responded Harkaway, with a yawn, "and I am far too tired, dear boy, too exert my power of divination."

"I should like to drive round the island in an open carriage."

Harkaway burst into a loud fit of laughter at this.

"Oh, Dick, Dick," he said, "I always knew that you were not a great geographer."

"Well," said Dick, humbly, "I can't really say that I am."

"But hang me if I ever thought to hear anyone speak of 'driving round' the island of Cuba, as if it were another Jersey, Guernsey, or the Isle of Wight."

"Well, no, Jack; but what is the extent of Cuba?"

"Why, rather more than the entire length of England and Scotland, taken from the most southern part of England to the northernmost point of Scotland."

They soon strolled out of the town and enjoyed the country for a time.

They passed by whole groves of orange trees, laden with luscious fruit.

"It is getting late enough for us to return," suggested Harkaway, pausing and turning.

"True; we have some distance to go," said Harvey.

They turned, and walked briskly on until they neared the town, when they were suddenly accosted by a fierce-looking sentry, who was on guard at one of the outposts.

He challenged them in Spanish, of which they understood not a single word, and Harkaway replied in English.

"Hable Espanol?"

"No."

"He is challenging us," remarked Harvey; "friends."

"Amigos," said Harkaway, "and there goes all my Spanish."

"Which may, or may not be correct," added Harvey, laughing.

"Americanos?" demanded the sentry.

Harkaway shook his head.

"Ingleses."

"Bravo!" said Harvey, laughing, "you are getting quite a don at it."

The sentry evidently did not understand what was said, for he took the laughter in bad part, and growled out something in his own tongue, whereupon they looked blankly at each other.

"What does he want?"

"Can't make head nor tail of it, for my part," said Harvey.

"Let us go, then."

They attempted to move by, but the sentry brought his bayonet to the charge.

"He looks like mischief," said Harkaway.

"He means it."

"Come on."

Harkaway was carrying a stick, so with a flourish he knocked up the bayonet and pushed on.

But the sentry quickly recovered himself, dropped back two paces, and brought his bayonet again to the charge, using some very hard-sounding words, as he did so in his native tongue.

"Hokey pokey rickeraboo," said Harvey, mimicking the soldier's tone and manner.

The sentry grew furious, and he made a lunge at Harvey, which Harkaway parried dexterously.

"Sword and target against bayonet," said Harvey.

"I haven't altogether forgotten the old practice," laughed Harkaway.

Now, had they contented themselves with parrying this warrior's thrusts, it might not have gone any further, but to be laughed at into the bargain was too much for the dignity of one of the most pompous of a people proverbially possessed of more pride than pence.

The soldier swore desperately; at least, so they judged, for of course they could not understand a word he uttered, and again recovering his rifle, he suddenly cocked it and covered Harkaway.

This was a startler.

What was to be done?

"Shall we show fight?" demanded Harkaway.

"No; discretion is the better part of valor," answered his companion; "drop it."

"What?"

"The game, and your stick too."

Harkaway let fall his stick, and made the sentry an extravagant sign of submission.

It was clear that they were laughing at him.

However, he grounded his rifle, and the next minute a guard of four men, commanded by a sergeant, marched up.

A hurried conversation ensued between the sentry and the sergeant, in which the only words that they could distinguish were "Ingleses" and "passports."

"Does any one here speak English?" asked Harkaway.

"I do, a little," said the sergeant.

This was a relief.

"What does our vigilant friend want with us, captain?" asked Harvey.

The sergeant smiled.

The mistake in his grade was not displeasing.

"He wants your passports."

"Then why in the name of all the furies couldn't he ask for them?"

"He says he did."

"Not he."

"He is a humbug," said Harkaway. Do you understand the meaning of that, captain?"

"Yes."

"Tell him, then."

"I cannot blame my man for being vigilant."

"True."

"But he rather overdid it," said Harvey, "and he wasn't polite."

The sergeant smiled.

"Give me your passports, and if they are correct, you can pass on in peace."

"Passports?"

"Yes."

"We don't carry any."

"What, no passports?"

"No."

"That is, to say the least, imprudent in such times as these; I must trouble you to fall in and come with us."

"Where?"

"To the guardhouse."

"What for?"

"Those are our orders."

The two Englishmen began to look glum.

"What shall we do Jack?" said Harvey, in a whisper, "fight or go?"

"Fighting for preference," returned Harkaway, in the same tone; "though I doubt if that would be the most prudent course."

"Perhaps not."

"Go, then?"

"Yes, it can't be long to get through the formalities."

"I suppose not."

"Now then, sirs," said the sergeant, "fall in—march."

And so it fell out that Jack Harkaway and his friend Dick Harvey passed the night in the guardhouse.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

YOUNG JACK ASHORE—A CUBAN PRISON.

You may imagine their sensations on board.

Not a wink of sleep did any one of their party get that night, and as soon as it was fairly daylight, young Jack sought his mother's cabin.

"Dad did not come back last night?" he said.

"No."

"Do you think, mamma, that anything could have happened to them?"

"Scarcely."

But the look of anxiety on her face belied her words. She was pale, and young Jack could perceive plainly enough the traces of tears upon her cheeks.

"I can see you are uneasy, mamma."

"No, no, Jack."

"You can't tell me," insisted her son, "but you are mistaken. Tears upon my father's account are thrown away. He knows how to take care of himself."

"Of course."

"Don't say of course as if it is meant only to satisfy me, and to leave you just as uneasy as before," said young Jack.

"My father," he added proudly, "is a match for a good many men in courage, in strength, or in wit—and with Uncle Dick (as he called Harvey occasionally) I would undertake to say they are fit to meet the most formidable enemies."

"Then you think that they have met enemies?"

He paused.

"I don't know, but I will go in quest of father and Harvey."

Having heard his father speak of the consul, young Jack thought that he could not do better than go there himself.

The consul was "fortunately an early man, so when young Jack sent up his name he was shown in at once.

"Mr. John Harkaway!" he said, as young Jack entered, "why I thought—"

"Jack Harkaway, sir—not John," said young Jack; "I am the son of Mr. Harkaway, you know."

"Your face and voice proclaim that."

"I come to ask news of my father."

The consul opened his eyes wide at this.

"News?"

"Yes, sir."

"What news?"

"Is it possible you don't know, sir?"

"Know what?"

"That my father has not been back on board?"

"Not all night?"

"No."

"This is very strange."

"It is, very—and it has made us very uncomfortable."

"No doubt. But these are ticklish times to live in,"

said the consul, "and perhaps they have been arrested on suspicion by the military."

"For what?"

"The insurgents get supplies in a way that baffles them altogether."

"But they cannot suspect my father in this?"

"They suspect anybody."

"Supposing he should be arrested, where would he be taken?"

"They would be taken to one of the prisons. However, we will waste no more time, young gentleman, but just make our round, without waiting until they can come to any further harm."

They started together.

On calling at the first prison, the consul contrived to get the information he required respecting Harkaway and Harvey.

They were not locked up there, but he found out where they were.

And when they were found, it was no trifling cause for alarm to discover that they were treated as the regular insurgent prisoners.

The consul applied for permission to visit them, but this was denied him.

Now, the consul happened to know that magistrate very well, so he lost no time in seeing him.

"I remember these two people," he said to the consul; "they are desperate fellows, I am told. One of them would have used violence to the sentry on duty."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; but fortunately they will have an opportunity of giving an account of themselves to me within a week."

"A week?"

"Yes."

"And then?" asked the consul.

"Yes, sir," added young Jack, eagerly, "what then?"

"If their innocence is clear to me, they will be set at liberty."

"But supposing—"

The poor boy began in faltering tones, but could not proceed.

To anticipate anything but a favorable result was heartbreaking.

"I know what you would say," interrupted the alcade.

"If there should be any doubt, why, then they will have an opportunity of clearing themselves before a legal tribunal, for I never pass a capital sentence myself."

Young Jack turned pale.

The remotest possibility of such a contingency filled him with dread.

"You do not think, sir, that there is any danger of my father and his friend not clearing themselves."

"I can't possibly say," he replied, with a piercing glance at Jack.

The alcade then made out and signed the order for their admission to see the prisoners, and they left the place.

They walked on in silence.

The consul feared that the alcade might not dare to set the English prisoners free.

In a very short time they reached the prison.

It was a tall, frowning fortress, built upon the rocks fronting the sea, which washed the base of the building.

The entrance was through a huge iron door, that swung sullenly ajar, and struck a chill to young Jack.

"My poor dad! poor Mr. Harvey!" he said. They must indeed be wretched here."

The door swung open.

They stepped forward just as a noisy burst of laughter rang out, and there they saw the two prisoners.

They were playing at cards on a rough wooden bench, and yelling with laughter at something that Harvey had just then said.

Beside them, upon the table, were cigars and wine.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

PRISON BREAKING—THREE TO THE RESCUE.

"Jack!"

"Dad!"

Father and son embraced.

Dick and the consul shook hands.

"Well, sir," said Harkaway, "these are pretty diggings to put two gentlemen in."

"I can't compliment your Spanish friends, added Harvey, laughing, "upon their hospitality to strangers."

"You don't appear to be very sad over it," said the consul.

"Not I. But have you brought the order for our release?"

"No."

"At any rate, we have to thank you for attending. I suppose you did not get my message last night?"

"I have had no message from you at all."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"That is strange. I sent you word as soon as we came here last night."

"My dear Mr. Harkaway," said the consul, gravely, "allow me to tell you everything is done irregularly now, or not at all."

"Well, I know that our coming here was precious irregular," said Harvey.

"And our getting out ought perhaps to be in keeping."

The consul seized upon this chance shot at once.

"That's it, as irregular as you please, only get out as quickly as possible."

Harvey and Jack looked through the barred window.

The sea flowed beneath, but there was a drop of thirty feet to reach it.

The consul looked down into the water and talked to himself thoughtfully, in a way that was meant for the prisoners to hear.

"It is a long way down; it would want a bold man and a strong swimmer to tackle that leap."

"I have dived from as great a height before now," said Harkaway.

"Have you?"

"Indeed, I have."

"And you, Mr. Harvey?"

"I shouldn't think much of it," replied the light-hearted Dick; "if there was a boat there or within half a mile or so, I would precious soon show them a clean pair of heels here."

"And would you recommend—" began Harkaway.

"I recommend nothing," answered the consul, warily; "it is for you to help yourselves."

Harkaway called young Jack to his side, and then gave him some hurried directions in a low but expressive voice, while the consul discreetly remained out of hearing.

"At dusk, Jack," said Harkaway, "you understand?"

"Yes."

"Don't leave it till dark, for fear of mistaking the direction."

"Never fear me."

"Have only one man with you, for this is desperate work."

"Have materials on you for getting a light, or still better carry a lantern; keep it covered over until you know we are off."

"How shall I know?"

"By a signal."

"What is it to be?"

"Let us wave our light three times at the window just before we leap."

"I understand," said young Jack, eagerly.

"God bless you, my boy! Keep a firm heart, and you will bring us off safely."

"Now, Master Harkaway!" said the consul.

"Time to go, sir?"

"Yes, if you have nothing more to say to your father."

"I am ready, sir."

And then, with a significant nod and glance, young Jack and the consul took their departure.

Towards sundown young Jack begged permission to go ashore in a boat.

"You can, Master Jack," said the captain, "with pleasure, if you are going to fetch Mr. Harkaway."

"I am going for that purpose, captain."

The skipper gave him permission also to take one of the crew with him.

Young Jack went to select a likely man, and going aft, he met Harry Girdwood, talking with a sailor whose face was certainly familiar to him.

The sailor evidently knew young Jack, for he pulled his forelock at him in salute.

"How's Nero by this time, your honor?"

Young Jack recollected him at once then.

It was Ben Hawser.

You will remember that Ben Hawser was the original owner of the big monkey, Nero.

"What, Ben?" said Jack. "What cheer, my hearty?"

"Your honor didn't observe poor Ben aboard. But I seen your honor often."

"Then you must have been too proud to speak to an old friend, Ben."

This appeared to tickle the old tar immensely.

And as they were talking, it occurred to young Jack that Ben Hawser would be the very man to row him up to the prison where his father was confined.

"I am going ashore, Ben," said young Jack, "and I want some one to row me."

"I'm the man."

"It is a matter of some danger," said young Jack.

"Blow danger," said Ben Hawser, heartily. "I'll jest get the skipper's permission."

"No need for that; I have got it already."

"That's hearty."

"I'm with you too," said Harry Girdwood.

"Very good, Harry. I had orders to have only one man with me, but there can be no harm in your going."

"I should think not."

They got a lantern and matches, and prepared to muffle their oars when they should be a mile out from the ship.

Then they got a couple of muskets, a cutlass, and a brace of revolvers.

Jack thought it best to be prepared for all emergencies, for there must be no mistake in this work.

They were soon under way, and pulling at a good rate toward the prison in which Harkaway and Harvey were confined.

"Now," cried young Jack, "I'll tell you both where we are going. Do you see that building over there?"

"Yes."

"My father and Mr. Harvey are 'n prison there."

"Prison!" cried Ben Hawser. "Avast, there!"

"They are, Ben, and they are in great danger."

"Of what?"

"There lives."

"What have they done?" asked Harry Girdwood.

"Nothing."

"Then how came these lubberly dons—"

"They don't care much whether it is right or wrong," answered young Jack, anticipating his questions. "Might is right, nowadays, here, so we must get my poor dad and uncle out of prison before the night is over."

"We will!"

"We will!" said Ben Hawser, "or I'm the biggest land-lubber that ever turned a quid."

It was dark by now.

They muffled their oars in silence, for they were within three quarters of a mile of shore, and the greatest precaution was necessary.

"Now for the lantern."

It was lighted and held aloft by Harry Girdwood.

And in the pitchy darkness of night they shipped their oars and lay to, watching in breathless anxiety for the signal from the prison window.

The fortress looked dark and frowning.

Not a glimmer of light could be seen at any part of it. Presently there was a roll of drums.

"Hark," cried young Jack; "what can that mean. Perhaps danger to my father."

Then all was still.

The silence grew oppressive, and poor young Jack began, in spite of himself, to be filled with uneasiness.

"I hope there is nothing amiss."

"Keep up your pecker and your patience, Master Harkaway," said Ben Hawser; "it'll all be right yet."

"I hope so."

"I'm sure of it."

They waited probably for about half an hour.

And then their patience was rewarded.

A light was seen at the window.

"There it goes," they exclaimed, all three together.

"Answer!" cried young Jack.

"How?"

"With the light, quick."

So saying he snatched it from Harry Girdwood, and waved the lantern backward and forward three times.

The lantern was waved at the window again thrice.

"Hurrah!" said Ben, shouting in a whisper—rather a difficult thing to do, by the way—"they see us. Look, they are giving the countersign."

"I see."

"In an hour, please God, we'll have them safe aboard," said young Jack.

But their work was not yet over.

Danger and death were near Harkaway and Dick Harvey.

CHAPTER XXXV.

A LEAP FOR LIFE AND A FLYING SHOT.

HARKAWAY and his friend Dick Harvey had been awaiting nightfall in considerable anxiety.

The former's only fear was that young Jack would be over eager to get off, and not curb his impatience until it would be safe to venture afloat near the prison.

Harvey watched at the window while Harkaway listened at the door.

"Will he never come?" said Harkaway, impatiently.

"There is something wrong, I fear."

"I fear it is so."

"It must be."

But even as they spoke, there was a faint glimmering of light seen upon the water.

"See there!" cried Harkaway.

"Where?"

"Look, look out at sea—that speck dancing there upon the waves."

"I see, I see!" said Harvey; "it grows larger—they signal us. Huzzah!"

"Hush! be cautious."

"Here," cried Harvey, "you take the lantern, and wave it three times as we agreed."

This was done; then they waited and watched in the most intense anxiety for a few minutes.

"Look, they answer it!"

The light was waved from the boat out at sea.

Harvey gave the countersign.

"Now for it."

Harkaway left the door.

His heart was beating quickly as the moment drew near.

He mounted on the chair as Harvey crouched by the window sill.

"Now for it," said Harvey.

"Wait one moment! Lower yourself a little way at least and then drop."

"No, no! better jump the whole way."

"It is a fearful leap, Dick."

"Right, old boy, but it is for life. I must jump out into deep water; if I drop straight down, I may fall on the rocks."

"True, Jack; now, then, a bold leap and off."

"Hark!"

"What was that?"

A roll of drums!

A heavy tread of soldiers.

It was unusual—it had an alarming sound, and they began to look blank.

"They have discovered something," said Harvey.

"I fear so," cried Jack; "if we are discovered, our death is certain."

"What shall we do?"

Harkaway paused a moment to consider.

"Better make a dash for it, and chance a leap for life, old boy."

"Good!"

Harvey turned to the window, and prepared for the jump.

He held out his hand behind him, and Harkaway seized it eagerly—a silent pressure from the true and old friends told all they had to say to each other.

They were brave men, but the peril before them was deadly, and it was just possible that they might never look upon each other more in this world.

That grasp was full of meaning to those two bold hearts.

"Now for it!"

Dick Harvey planted his feet firmly upon the ledge, and then he made a desperate leap into the dark waters. At the self-same moment a rifle was fired under the window.

Harkaway's heart beat quick with dread for his old friend.

Harkaway clambered up eagerly.

He looked down, down into the black, sullen water. But he heard no splash.

"Bang!"

Again a loud report from a rifle.

He saw no signs of Dick.

He had not yet risen to the surface.

He waited and watched until his eyes ached with the intensity of gaze.

No signs of Dick.

It seemed an age.

"Oh, Dick! oh, Dick!" cried Harkaway, lifting his voice in agony, "what shall I do if you are gone, killed by these bloodhounds, brave heart? My best and noblest friend, where shall I replace your loss?"

Craning over, straining his eyes until it seemed as though they would burst from their sockets.

And presently the reward for his patience came.

He saw a figure dashing through the water.

By degrees he could detect the outline of a human form battling boldly with the waves.

"Bravo, Dick! bravo, old man!" cried Harkaway excitedly.

But then, as the swimmer progressed rapidly, his anxiety grew less.

He felt sure that Dick was safe.

And turning from the window for a moment, he ran to the door of the cell to listen, for he fancied that he heard the tramp of the jailer in the stone-paved passage.

"Yes; he's coming!"

This was unlucky.

What was to be done?

Before he could reflect upon this, the door was unbarred and thrown open.

The jailer entered.

"The sentry says it is from here," he began as he came in, "but he must be as mad as an Englishman to say so—hullo!"

Harkaway had squatted down again upon a bench in the middle of the cell, and was endeavoring to look as innocent and unconcerned as possible.

"Hullo!"

Harkaway nodded with a cheerful air.

"Where's the other?"

"Which other?"

"Your friend and fellow-prisoner," was the reply.

"I have neither, don't you see I'm alone?"

The man now began to perceive that he was being fooled, so he moved angrily toward the door.

Harkaway slipped sharply after him, and blocked up the doorway.

"Stand aside," said the jailer, who somehow did not like the look of the prisoner.

Harkaway made no reply, but dropping upon the man with sudden fierceness, he toppled him over and bore him to the ground.

"If you say half a word," hissed the prisoner in the jailer's ear. "I'll put an end to you."

The man was silent.

His face showed what he felt, and this was anything but pleasant.

"Lay there," said Harkaway, getting up. "Keep quiet, and you'll not be hurt. Breathe but a word, and—"

He said no more, but his looks told their own tale.

Harkaway jumped up to the window and looked out.

It had all taken place in a moment, and the boat was still apparently in the same spot.

The light was still shining at the boat's head, but there were no signs of the swimmer.

"He is safe on board by now," said Harkaway.

Barely were the words uttered, when he had to turn round to see what was taking place in the cell.

The jailer being relieved from the prisoner's unpleasant attentions, had crawled on his stomach to the door and given the alarm.

Armed men ran in, and in less time than it takes to write the words, Jack Harkaway was covered by no less than five rifles.

"Yield!" cried the jailer.

"Pickles!" returned Harkaway.

And then, before they could have an idea of his intentions, he waved his hand and leaped out of the window.

Stupefied for a moment, the men sprang forward to the window, and one of them stared down into the pitchy darkness.

"There he goes," cried the soldier.

Several others sprang up.

They crowded to the window.

Muskets were pointed—hurried sights were taken at something moving, which they took to be the prisoner, and a sharp succession of reports followed.

And then they watched anxiously until the smoke cleared away, to see if their aim had been as deadly as they had hoped.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE VASTY DEEP!—A MEETING IN MID-OCEAN.

JACK HARKAWAY, the elder went down, down, down, until his breath was almost cut by the terrible fight through the air.

At length—ah, it seemed a terrible time—he struck the water. He went below, and his downward flight was checked.

He sailed along in semi-unconsciousness for awhile, and then, as the cold water revived him, he struck upward.

He shook the water from his eyes and face, and looked about him.

Yes, there was the light still.

He struck out for it, and after swimming awhile, he

shouted out with all his might and main, and then turned over on his back and floated with long and vigorous strokes towards it.

But while he was floating thus, his eyes were fixed upon the window of the prison from which he had just leapt, and suddenly he saw there that he was the object of most unpleasant attentions upon the part of the authorities.

There was a flash—a report—and a rifle bullet struck the water close by Jack Harkaway's head.

"That's enough for me," said Harkaway.

And down he went under water.

Now, as he breasted the surface again, he ran foul of some dark object that thrilled him with fear.

So quick is thought that he went through a whole drama of horrors in his fancy—all, as it were, in a flash.

He thought it was a shark.

The monster of the deep would have had him in his ghastly maw in a moment, and then good-bye to all.

Good-bye to the world; to his hopes and fears; to his love, and fancies generally—he would never be able to look again upon his Emily or his boy.

Good-bye to—

Hullo!

Why, it was not a shark, it was about as different from a shark in point of fact as anything could well be.

It was a man, and, like Harkaway, a fugitive.

He, too, was swimming towards that light on the sea.

Yes, swimming for dear life.

"Help! oh, help me!" gasped the swimmer.

"I've scarce strength to save myself," replied Harkaway, faintly.

"I sink!" faltered the other. "I sink! I die! Oh, help!"

Harkaway was sorely distressed.

Yet he was not the man to leave a fellow-creature in peril, and so, at the risk of his own life, he turned to lend a hand to the sinking man.

Just then there was another flash at the fortress window.

Then a report.

And then a ball whizzed past Harkaway, and struck the unfortunate man beside him in the water.

"Oh, mercy!" cried the unfortunate wretch.

He threw up his arms in his agony, and sank.

Down, down he dropped, like a lead end of a line, and down went Harkaway after him.

What ensued was the work of a minute.

To help an unfortunate fellow-creature was with Jack Harkaway a sort of instinct.

Had he been able to reason it, he would surely never have ventured upon such rashness; for he was already so much exhausted himself that his preservation hung, as it were, upon a mere thread.

As it was, he seized the wounded and drowning man by the hair, and made a vigorous stroke upwards.

A little more, and it would have been too late.

His strength, his senses were fast leaving him.

"Hold up!" gasped Harkaway. "Now strike out—both arms, both—I say!"

A voice that was familiar then rang in the ears in welcome words of encouragement.

"Keep up!"

"That's right!"

"One more!"

"Bravo!"

"Boldly done, my hearty; never saw a betterer as sure as my cognomen's Hawser!"

And as the words were uttered, a pair of strong hands grasped the exhausted Harkaway by the hair, and he was unceremoniously lifted out of the water and dragged into the boat.

The man that Harkaway had saved was likewise cared for.

And then the oars were unshipped, and while two of the party bestowed every care upon the half-drowned men, the others rowed desperately out of musket range of the fortress.

And as they rowed away in silence, the moon burst through the inky clouds and shed a silvery ray across the boat.

It fell across the face of the unfortunate stranger, upon whom the boat's crew—including Harkaway, who had recovered from his exhaustion in some degree—were exerting their best cares to bring him round.

The aim of the soldier who had fired from the fortress window had been too true.

The ball had struck the water first, and so was partly spent before touching the unfortunate man, otherwise nothing could have saved him.

As it was, it had inflicted an ugly wound upon his head, from which the blood gushed, saturating his face and covering it in a mask of gore.

They washed it off as tenderly as possible, and staunching the wound with a soaked handkerchief.

And then, as the silver moonlight fell upon that pallid, ghastly face, young Jack recognized the features.

He gave a cry of horror.

"Father, father, look!"

"Where? What?"

"Don't you remember him now, father? Look!"

The elder Harkaway glanced again at the newly-rescued man, and a cry of amazement, disgust, wonder, disappointment burst from him.

"Merciful Heaven! It's Hunston!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

HUNSTON!

THE notices which the British consul caused to be written out by his clerk and posted about caused great excitement.

The notices had been posted in the quarters where Senior Ostani, otherwise Hunston, had been well known.

In less than an hour there were many persons on the hunt after Ostani.

Information was zealously sought after concerning the movements of the released prisoners, and some reliable particulars were gleaned. They had not left the island.

No sooner was this known than a regular plan was organized for their pursuit.

The coast was guarded by a number of those whom the English scoundrel had victimized.

Every boat was keenly scrutinized.

Now, while the excitement which this created was at its height, two men, greatly interested in the matter, stood reading the proclamation, which was posted up at the consulate door.

One of these was a one-armed man.

Next him stood a tall fellow, of herculean build, whose fine proportions were shown off to great advantage by a long riding cloak.

It made his figure look colossal.

"Diavolo!" exclaimed the latter, under his breath. "This is a serious job, Hunst—"

"No names!" interrupted his companion, affrightedly.

"We are observed."

"Where?"

"Behind there."

Surely enough, too, there was a man watching them with great interest.

They exchanged a few hurried whispers and sauntered off.

As soon as they were free from the attentions of the person who had excited their suspicions, Hunston spoke to his companion—who was none other than the ex-brigand Toro.

It will be remembered that he had been strangely carried off after his desperate fight with Jefferson.

"Lend me your cloak; it will hide my deformity. The loss of an arm fixes my identity to the casual observer."

The cloak was exchanged.

"Now, what is your advice?" asked Hunston.

"I think it would be safer to remain in the town until nightfall, and then have a boat sent ashore for you."

"You're right," observed Hunston, "but great care must be observed."

"It must."

"The boat had better be sent ashore out of the town."

"When?"

"Let me see."

They thought it over for a while, and then Toro had a suggestion to offer.

"You know where the fortress is situated?"

"Well."

"They shall pull ashore there, and fetch you."

"Good."

"True."

And so they parted.

It was agreed that a rocket should be fired from the ship before the boat left.

Hunston strolled about to kill time before nightfall, and in his rambles he came to a public garden where music and dancing were going forward.

On entering, he had resolved merely to call for some refreshment, and to take it in a remote corner, so as to avoid all accidents.

But this was not to be.

Hunston was recognized almost immediately.

He saw it, and slipping out, made off at full speed.

Then, with loud outcries, the whole of the company fled after him and gave chase. The hunt, however, such as it was, was but short lived. No signs of the fugitive could they discover. Thanks to his knowledge of the locality, he managed very soon to get out of danger. Out of danger for the present, at least. But it was by no means over. He had to reach the coast by a circuitous route, so as to be in readiness for the signal from the ship. And then, for two long, weary hours, he prowled about in anxious expectation, waiting and watching, and full of weariness. Would they never come? Would they never send up that signal-rocket? It seemed so.

"There it goes!"

From that moment the wretched man was not alone. Two of his Cuban foes glided after him as he moved along toward the seashore, for they had seen the rocket which Hunston's comrades had sent up as the signal agreed upon for the departure of the boat, and this had excited their attention. They had not proceeded far when they recognized in the mysterious man in the cloak the traitorous Ostani, upon whose head, so to speak, a price was set.

"Caramba!" murmured one to the other in an undertone; "it is Ostani himself!"

"After him, then, and let us make sure of him."

"Good."

They soon caught up with him, and then, with a hand on each shoulder, they brought him up to a standstill.

"Stand!"

"How now?" ejaculated Hunston, turning round.

"You are our prisoner."

"What for?"

"That you shall answer to the alcalde."

"Pah!" ejaculated Hunston, turning round; "unhand me, or—"

But instead of complying they only clutched him the more firmly, whereupon a short but sharp struggle took place. Hunston, however, contrived to shake them off.

And then he darted forward, and made a desperate run of it towards the fortress in which his two redoubtable enemies had been confined. We mean Jack Harkaway and Dick Harvey. When he reached the castle there was no sign of the boat. Despair! The pursuers were fast nearing him. He could hear their foot-steps close behind him. Suddenly he saw the boat, as he thought, flashing a signal light at him, and then he made a dash at the water, cast aside his cloak, and leapt boldly in. He heard shots fired, and he felt sure that he was the target; but he was safe so far. Little did he know what had taken place in that gloomy fortress.

Little did he think that he was trusting his fortunes to the deep at the self-same moment as his old enemy, Jack Harkaway. He heard the firing, and then he chuckled.

"The fools," he said to himself; "they have as much idea of shooting as the whistling oyster, or a white elephant."

And so he swam on. Now, Hunston was a strong swimmer, and, spite of his loss of an arm, he made

great headway. But the task before him was more than he had counted upon, and so it fell out that, in a very little while, he was exhausted. He still struggled desperately on, however. Struggled as only a drowning man will struggle. And when he thought that it was all over with him, he fell in with Harkaway, as previously described.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

IN THE HANDS OF THE ENEMY.

HUNSTON remained unconscious. Loss of blood and long immersion in the water had thoroughly exhausted him, and his senses fled. The recognition had not been mutual. No. Young Jack had addressed himself to his father upon making the discovery of Hunston's identity, and his words had not been overheard by Hunston himself. And so it fell out that the Harkaways were destined to return good for evil, to save the life of the bitterest enemy they had upon the earth, one who had sought their destruction again and again. And under what extraordinary circumstances was this to be brought about? Harkaway the elder sat in the boat as one stupefied by the adventure. He could not realize it yet.

They were soon aboard ship.

"Jack."

"Well, Dick, old boy."

"Glad to see you by my side again, old man."

"And I too, Dick, believe me," returned Harkaway, with heartfelt sincerity. Then they pressed each other's hand with warmth. Since they had last grasped each other's hand in silent emotion, half an hour had barely elapsed. Certainly not more. Yet into that half-hour had been crowded such a series of excitements that he appeared to have gone through a lifetime of wonders. But how had Toro failed to keep his promise about the boat? His companions had lacked courage at the moment. When the rocket went up as a signal for the fugitive, the boat neared the shore, and the alarming sounds from the prison had roused the crew to a sense of their own danger, and the consequence was that in spite of entreaties, prayers, threats, they would not persevere in their course, and gently rowed back to their ship.

When the insensible Hunston was carried on board by Harkaway and his party, there was another who recognized him. Nero. The monkey recognized his old enemy immediately, and would have pounced upon him. But the crew kept him off, much to the monkey's disgust and disappointment. Now, when Hunston had regained consciousness, a surprise was in store for him. But very soon his feeling of satisfaction at his escape predominated over all else. He was as tenderly cared for as if he had been a dear friend instead of a bitter enemy. At first they felt inclined to give Hunston up to the Cuban authorities. But this notion was soon abandoned.

"Better have left him to perish in the sea," said Harkaway, "than trust him to their mercies."

"But justice will be dealt out to him," said Captain Disher.

"Justice!" said Harkaway. "Justice is unknown there."

And so that idea was abandoned. Harkaway did not seek for revenge upon his old enemy. He had saved him again. Surely this was vengeance enough for any one. Hunston felt it deeply, and he did not attempt to disguise his feelings upon the subject or to mince matters in any way.

"Harkaway," he said, "we have been enemies since we were boys, and shall be to our graves."

"I know it," said Harkaway.

"Then why did you save me?"

"I saw a fellow-creature perishing, and—"

"You risked your life to preserve his?"

"Not knowing it was your life I was saving," persisted Harkaway. "So that you may be relieved from all sense of gratitude, if you find that embarrassing, Hunston."

"So you would not have saved me had you known who it was struggling in the water?"

"Probably not. Yet, no; I can scarcely say that."

"I know you can't," quickly returned Hunston. "You would have done it all the same. I know your spirit, and I hate you none the less for that."

Harkaway moved off, and young Jack came to see his old enemy, accompanied by Harry Girdwood and Mr. Mole.

"Hunston," said the latter, "I hope you have repented of your vicious course of life."

Hunston's reply was brief and characteristic.

"No, you old donkey, I have not."

"Shocking!" exclaimed the tutor.

"Don't preach then, Mr. Mole," said Hunston; "I can't stand it now."

"But you disabled me for life, Hunston," said the tutor, pointing grievously to his wooden leg.

"That was accidental, quite," replied Hunston. "And moreover, Mr. Mole, I wasn't engaged in that business."

"I know you were," said Harry Girdwood.

"Silence," interrupted Hunston, with contempt.

Harry Girdwood would have rushed upon him had he not restrained him.

"You thief and murderer," cried young Girdwood; "you robbed me of my brother; you murdered him, and I'll have vengeance for that foul deed."

The villain Hunston positively quailed before the indignant glance of the boy.

"And you would murder me?" he said.

"No," retorted Harry Girdwood, "for that would be letting you off too easily."

"What do you mean?"

"That I would have your life, if I could have my own way, to suffer the tortures I endure. Do you feel the loss of your arm very much?"

"I do."

His look was a mixture of sullenness and sadness, and

they saw what bitterness it had caused him. Harry Girdwood noted it.

"Well, Hunston," he said, fixing him with his deep black eyes, "I shall take your other arm," Hunston started.

He had never met a boy like young Girdwood, and he felt nervous about him. There was an earnestness in his manner—an utter absence of brag, that made Hunston fear for the future.

"Toro has already paid the penalty of his crimes," said young Jack.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Rather—we saw him lying dead with our own eyes," said Mr. Mole.

"You are mistaken, then," said Hunston, with a light laugh. "Toro is not dead; he never was, in fact, more lively than now. The wounds he received were desperate, but not fatal. He has had many a rough tussle, has Toro, and he takes a good deal of killing."

They stared again.

"Can it be true?"

"Of course it is."

"What proof have you?" inquired one of them.

"I left him on the island of Cuba. Moreover, it was I who rescued him when you left him for dead—at the peril of my own life."

They were convinced.

"So much the better," said young Harry Girdwood. "I shall have the life of my poor brother's murderer yet."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

WALKING THE PLANK.

THREE or four days later the Harkaway party fell in with a stirring adventure. It was early one morning that Nabley, the detective, discovered the spars and loose rigging of a wreck floating about to leeward. Immediately he made known his discovery to the captain. The captain caused boats to be lowered and observations taken, and the result of it was that they made a strange and uncomfortable discovery. There were certain signs about the wreck that told them that a battle had taken place there, and that the ill-fated vessel had been sunk in hard fighting. What could it mean? Who were the belligerents? The skipper could only hazard a guess:

"I should think," said Captain Disher, "that it is a French merchantman which has fallen foul of a pirate."

This startled his hearers, as you may suppose.

"A pirate?"

"Yes."

"And what kind of pirates do you suppose them to be?"

"I should say a Chinese or a Malay. I feel sure that there were Malays on board."

"Why?"

"Because we found a creese—a regular Malay instrument—stuck into one of the loose pieces of the wreck; so that not only should I say they were Malays, but I should also say that they had some precious hard fighting before the Malay wretches made their victory sure."

They presently fished up a barrel half full of rum that was floating not far from the rest of the wreck, and the words branded on the barrel confirmed their belief that it was a French ship which had been destroyed. They went on their way, saddened by the reflections which these fragments of wreck had called up.

"Ship ahead!"

A dozen glasses were immediately set upon the distant vessel.

"What is she?" demanded the skipper.

"A Dutchman," returned one of the bystanders.

"No, no; an American," said a second.

"A Yankee, for a wager."

"A Yankee—a Yankee," echoed several.

The captain gave a long and steady look through his glass himself. Then he handed it to Jack Harkaway the elder.

"What do you say, Mr. Harkaway?" he asked.

Jack took the glass. Then he gave a long, steady look before he pronounced his opinion.

"It is a Chinese junk."

Captain Disher took back his glass and looked long and earnestly through it.

"Well, captain?"

The skipper nodded at Harkaway.

"You are right."

"Is it a Chinaman?"

"Yes."

Every minute now made it less and less a matter of doubt. A sailor up aloft on the look-out came down, the cords gliding swiftly through his glowing hands, bursting with a piece of most significant intelligence.

"Is it a junk, Ben?" said Harkaway.

"Aye, aye, your honor," echoed Ben Hawser, for he was the look-out man from up aloft; "a precious rum junk, too."

"What do you mean by that, Ben?"

"Why, a shark?" returned Ben Hawser, with an oath; "and if it ain't the werry identical shark as sunk that poor Frenchman, why, you may call me the greatest landlubber as ever crawled."

"Do you think there is anything suspicious in the craft?" demanded Harkaway in an undertone.

"I do," replied the skipper.

"Why?"

"You may trust Ben Hawser as well as most men. He has had more experience than I have," added the captain, with great frankness; "more than any hand aboard this ship."

"But may he not be mistaken?"

"I doubt it."

And soon as all doubt upon the subject was set at rest. They were fast gaining upon the Chinaman, until at length they could, by the aid of their glasses, make out the build of the vessel, and finally the figures of the crew moving about on board.

"Ben!" said Captain Disher.

"Your honor."

"Come here."

The skipper and the old tar went aft to converse alone. They talked together for some few moments in great earnestness. Then they called the rest of them into their confidence.

"Will you gentlemen step here for a moment?" said the skipper.

"Mr. Harkaway!"

"Sir?"

"Mr. Harvey!"

"Here."

"Mr. Nabley!"

"Here."

"Mr. Pike!"

"Here."

"Now all we want are Mr. Magog Brand and Mr. Jefferson."

"Where's young Jack?" said Harkaway, senior.

"Here, dad."

"Go below and fetch Mr. Jefferson and Mr. Brand."

"Say that Captain Disher begs the favor of a few minutes' conversation," said the skipper.

"Aye, aye, sir," said young Jack.

"A smart lad, your son, Mr. Harkaway," said Captain Disher, "and you ought to be proud of him."

"I am."

"And I too," said Harvey; "we all are proud of him, in fact, and reason we have too for our pride."

Back came young Jack, followed by Mr. Jefferson and his little friend, Magog Brand, the two negroes, Sunday and Monday, and Isaac Mole.

"Now, gentlemen," said Captain Disher, "I have a matter to consult you on which demands the greatest discretion."

"You can rely on us all," said Mr. Jefferson.

"I know it."

"It is about the Chinaman out yonder, if I mistake not," said Magog Brand.

The captain nodded.

"That is a Chinese pirate?"

"A pirate!" echoed his hearers, in a breath.

"Yes; moreover, it is a vessel which Ben Hawser knows of old. It is a junk that cruises about these latitudes, preying upon the smaller craft, and, as a rule, fighting very shy of anything likely to give them any trouble. Now, they would not be likely to cause us any trouble if we chose to show them a clean pair of heels."

"Then, by all means do it," said Mr. Mole, eagerly.

"Silence!"

"Let the captain continue."

"Now, I have a scheme for playing a little game of our own with John Chinaman, if you are all willing."

"Explain, captain," said Mr. Jefferson.

"Why, the game I have to propose would involve us in some danger, and I don't know whether we should be justified in leading you into it."

"Why not?"

"At least not without your consent."

"We give it."

"Understand," said the captain, "that with your consent danger, and perhaps death, will be close to every man on board."

"Very good, gentlemen; I knew you would be all of that mind, only as you have wives and families, I thought you would like to have the matter submitted to your consideration first," said Captain Disher.

"Put it to the vote," suggested Magog Brand.

"Hands up, then!" said the skipper, "hands up for ayes—who agrees to follow out my scheme?"

All hands went up but Isaac Mole's. Thereupon the tutor, finding himself alone, was fearful of losing his character for bravery, and up went his hand with a flourish.

"All agreed?"

"Aye!"

"Very good."

"Now for the details," said Mr. Jefferson.

"And count upon my help," said Mr. Mole, grandly.

"Thank you, sir," replied the captain, who had a certain sense of the ridiculous; "no doubt it will prove most valuable."

And then Captain Disher proceeded to explain his plans for tricking the Chinese pirate ship. They had a few guns—very few—but amongst them was one which was a terrible weapon. It was only a small brass swivel-gun, but it was mounted upon a clever mechanical contrivance, which made it as easy to point as a pocket pistol, and it was as true as a die. This they placed upon the quarter-deck and covered it over with a piece of tarpaulin, so that it looked more like luggage, with a covering to protect it from the weather, than a gun.

"The next thing, captain?" demanded Jefferson.

"Mustering all the small arms on board; let everything be loaded and placed in readiness for immediate use."

"Next?"

"Next let the cutlasses be—"

"Man overboard!" cried the look-out.

"Where?"

"From the Chinaman, sir," was the reply. "They've made a poor devil walk the plank, your honor."

Glasses were brought to bear upon the scene, and it was found to be true. The pirates had got an unfortunate wretch of a prisoner, whom they had just driven overboard with blows and prods from their marlinspikes, cutlasses, creeses, and other weapons. The look-out had seen them distinctly force the unhappy being over the ship's side, and he was seen struggling in the water, until he caught at a floating spar and held himself up by its aid. They sailed on, until, when near him, they had him picked up by one of the ship's boats. Just in time. Had they been ten minutes later, he would have gone down forever. The rescued man was a little fat fellow, with a round bullet head, and a fat face with a long moustache and imperial, worn after the fashion of the late Emperor Napoleon. He was so thoroughly exhausted that he was scarcely able to thank his rescuers for awhile, but when he did get his breath, his volubility was something amazing.

"I can nevere tank you so mosh dan I would," said he.

bowing to his knees before Captain Disher. "You have saved my life, capitaine."

"All right, mounseer," replied Captain Disher; "no use to palaver over it. I should have done as much for any scoundrel afloat."

"Morbien!"

"Now tell us," said Harkaway, eagerly. "Is yonder vessel a pirate?"

"Pardiel yes."

"Small need to ask it," said the captain.

"And they have fought a French ship?" asked Jack.

"Yes, mine, mine ship."

"Name the ship?"

"La Fleur de Marie, du Haxre."

"You fought hard, I suppose?"

"Comment donc!" ejaculated the little Gaul, fiercely. "Hard! we fight like geants."

"Many killed?"

"Hélas, hélas!" sighed the Frenchman; "all."

"All?"

"Oui, monsieur tous."

"Two?" said the skipper, with a puzzled air; "and that all the crew. The 'Fleur de Marie' couldn't have been a very important craft."

"No," remarked Jack Harkaway, laughing heartily at this; "tous is the French for all—everybody."

"Oh!" cried the skipper, quite nettled at his mistake; "then if two means everybody, it's a damned stupid lingo, that's all I've got to say on the matter."

CHAPTER XL.

THE BATTLE WITH THE PIRATE.

"Hold hard, monsieur! Did they see us aboard the junk before you had the walk into the water?"

"No."

"Sure?"

"Certain, monsieur."

"Then it is possible that they have not seen us even yet," cried Harkaway.

"Scarcely," said Captain Disher; "they would watch him in the water, and then they would be sure to see us, even if their look-out had been so badly kept before."

"Pent-etre—perhaps," said the little Frenchman; "I am not sure. They were all so drunks than a pig. I mix de grog myself."

"I don't quite understand how you mean," said Jack Harkaway. "How came you to mix the grog for them?"

"I will tell you," replied the little man, "when dey fall upon us, and I see dat we shall all be lost—all be prisoners or killed, so I got the laudanum from de medicine box, and pour into de rum and de wine."

"Oh!" cried Harkaway, "I see now."

"So I serve dem all grog, and presently half began to snore; but dere was tree of the crew—des abrutis—beasts Malays, who will not to drink, and dey suspect someting—les miserables! Dey make me walk de plank into de sea, where they pretend to see sharks."

"So then, Mossos Potirong," said Captain Disher, "the best part of this crew are tight?"

"Tight?"

"Yes."

"Vat is tight?"

"Half seas ovare."

The little Frenchman was puzzled at this.

"Half seas ovare? I do not know him more dan de order."

"Groggy—soapy," explained one of the bystanders; and then he showed it by pantomimic gestures.

He made signs of drinking, and then rolled about with an exaggerated unsteadiness of gait which there was no misunderstanding.

"I see, I see," said Hypolite Potiron; "gris—en ribote."

"Call it whatever you like, monsieur; we means tight," persisted Ben Hawser, "and that's clear enough for any honest man to say—tight's the word."

"Well, then, tight—yes, monsieurs; so drunk dan Polonais."

Ben Hawser started again at this queer simile.

"As drunk as polonies!" he exclaimed. "Well, of all the rum lingoos, this blessed parleyvoo licks them all."

Harkaway got impatient of these misunderstandings and playing on mistakes in language, and so, as briefly as possible, he put the matter before M. Hypolite Potiron.

"What we want to do is this," said Harkaway; "we think that, without exposing ourselves to any very desperate risk, we can take a rise out of John Chinaman."

Monsieur Potiron nodded approvingly.

"Vat sail you to do?"

"You shall see."

They set to work in the first place to rig up a tarpaulin canopy on deck; which was to shelter their operations from view. Under this canopy they set to work actively to collect their small arms, which were loaded by two of the sailors. They next got the largest gun they possessed up under their canopy and wheeled it round into position. This done, the captain asked for good marksmen to volunteer to go up into the rigging.

"Consider me for one, captain," said Magog Brand; "my Remington will pick a few of the pirates off."

"I'll make one," added Jefferson, "and the rascals shall find I am no baby with powder and shot."

"I'll join you," said Nabley, who was a crack shot.

"I'm with you also," cried Pike, and he followed his comrades into the shrouds.

"Gently does it gentlemen all," said Captain Disher.

"Gently it is."

"Understand, if they should happen to be on the look-out, in spite of Mounseer Puttyrongs dosing, they must not suspect anything."

And so the shrouds were manned by volunteer sharpshooters. Every man carried a death-dealing weapon and twenty rounds. Every round meant death for some one, for those brave men scarcely knew what missing the mark meant.

"I've read, Captain Disher," said young Jack Harkaway, "of burning a vessel."

"How?"

"Red-hot shot, captain."

"Well, Master Harkaway, and what then?"

"Why not try it on now?"

"There is something in what you say, my lad."

"Then you'll do it?"

"What do you say, Mr. Harkaway, to your son's suggestion?" asked the captain.

"Might do worse," replied Harkaway.

"True; but I must fire low."

"Just above the watermark. I suppose?" said Harkaway.

"That's it."

"Good."

The preparations went bravely on. Ten bold and skillful marksmen were up in the rigging. These were Magog Brand, Jefferson, Nabley, Pike, Dick Harvey, Monday, Harry Girdwood, a passenger named Professor Shloppen, who was near-sighted, and shot in spectacles with a muzzle-loader, and two of the sailors. The two guns beneath the tarpaulin canopy were manned by the most efficient gunners on board. The crew were then all summoned to the captain's side, and he gave them a brief but stirring address.

"Listen to me, my lads," Captain Disher said; "I've got some good news for you. Now I have reason to believe that, as true-born men, you will be mighty pleased to hear—"

"Aye, aye, captain."

"Well, my men, the Chinaman you see ahead of us is a pirate."

The men gave a groan.

"Those sharks have just run down and scuttled a French ship, and murdered the crew and passengers in cold blood."

Another groan.

"Well, I ask you, as English and Americans, can you stand by and witness these things?"

"No!"

"No, no!"

"No, of course we can't," said the captain. "Then what shall we do?"

"Down with the pirates!" cried the crew, with one voice.

"That's it," said the skipper; "I knew you would say that. Down with the pirates! Now we must make them feel our power."

"Aye, aye, captain, let them feel our power," cried the sailors, some of them commencing to tuck up their sleeves.

"Now, I'll tell you," continued Captain Disher, "that poor devil of a mounseer we rescued has greatly helped us, to begin with. He has made a lot of them square by hocussing their grog."

"Hurrah for the mounseer!" shouted one of the crew.

"According to his report there are only a few of the men fit to take care of themselves; but three to one we don't mind, but we must creep up close on to 'em. Then, before they can say Jack Robinson, pop a couple of red-hot shot into 'em."

"But suppose, your honor," said one of the sailors, "that they turn up right and show fight?"

"Well, what then?"

"It might look awkward like if we couldn't get out of range of their guns."

"Out of range be blowed!" interrupted Ben Hawser. "Why, we have got a lot of gentlemen in the rigging as can shoot against any team in creation."

"Yes, but—"

"But—but—but!" cried Ben Hawser, impatiently, "the skunks won't stand a chance against us; 'they'll be picked off as fast as they appear."

"But they may be twenty to one."

"I confess," said the captain, "we have got a tough job before us; but if we are all of one mind and plenty of pluck, we shall avenge those poor Frenchmen and women who have been brutally murdered."

"Huzza!" cried one of the more enthusiastic of the men. And then they all took up the cry, with the exception of one man. He did not seem to relish the job, and, grumblingly, he dissented.

"But supposing that we should be beaten?"

"And—"

"And get into a mess?"

"Why, then," coolly returned Captain Disher, "we should in all probability be made short work of."

"Ugh!"

"You don't care for that?"

"Well, I don't. I signed articles to help work ship, not to fight pirates."

"So you did, Mason," returned the captain, quickly.

"So you did."

"And I don't care to—"

"Quite right," interrupted Captain Disher, thoroughly incensed at this. "Go down below until the skirmish is over. Down with you."

The man paused, and then, irritated by the crew, he turned round and faced the skipper with a bold front.

"Go down below, Mason," said the captain, sharply.

"and save your precious skin. No remarks. We don't want any half-hearted men. They do more harm than good at such a time as this."

Mason retreated and went below. The rest of the crew were not merely willing to fight the pirate, they were delighted with the chance. The preparations for the encounter being so far completed in one direction, they turned their attention to the decoy part of the performance. It was done in this way.

A quadrille party was got up aft by the sailors, a clumsy affair, for they were better at hornpipes than at the "ladies' chain," but it was good enough for the purpose. All that was wanted, of course, was a show of amusements, in order to make the pirates, all the more sure of an easy and bloodless victory, when they chose to strike. Altogether it was a very singular sight.

Eight burly Jack tars performing a quadrille while another was fiddling away. Young Jack and Harry Girdwood were dressed in female apparel, and to look at the peaceful gaiety of the scene, few persons would have dreamt that warlike preparations were so far advanced that they were eagerly awaiting the moment to strike.

Nearer and nearer the two ships drew to each other.

And now they were so near that up aloft they could see distinctly all that was going forward on board.

This corroborated all that the little Frenchman had said. There were three or four dark-skinned fellows, naked to their waists, and armed with a formidable array of knives and pistols stuck in their belts. These were the Malays. It was pretty evident that they were the only members of the crew that were not under the influence of liquor.

"Do they all seem asleep or dead on board?" asked the captain.

Jefferson gave a look through the glass again before replying.

"The Malays are busy enough, captain," he replied, "but the Chinamen appear to me to be asleep. They're calling them up from below."

"I can see them tumbling up."

"So can I," said Magog Brand; "they are swarming up the hatchways now like bees."

"Up they come."

It was true. The thought of plunder near had served more than anything else to shake off the drowsiness of the pirates. In the space of about ten minutes the deck was literally alive with the repulsive-looking wretches who traded in slaughter.

"They appear to be working into something," said Pike; "I can see one man, who appears to be an officer, giving commands."

"Un grand?" called up Monsieur Potiron. "a tall, big von?"

"Yes."

"Dat is de capitaine."

"Is he? By gum!" ejaculated Pike.

"Then he shall have half an ounce of solid lead if I can shoot a little bit."

"I say, mounseer," said Captain Disher, "can you shoot?"

"Un peu—a leetle," answered the Frenchman, "See here."

He drew back his coat and showed a silver medal on his breast.

"Premier prix—first prize for shooting at the tir," he said proudly.

"You clamber up into the rigging, then," said the captain, quickly. "You know their officers, and you can pick them off."

The Frenchman was soon provided with a capital rifle—Harkaway's property—and up he went like a cat. Once there, he could not control his impatience as the others had done, but taking a long, steady aim at the pirate captain, he blazed away. The tall pirate captain dropped with a bullet in his brain.

"Who's that?" called out Captain Disher, furiously.

"Me," returned Monsieur Potiron, proudly. "I have killed de capitaine."

"And us too, very likely; hang your blundering. Now then, Ben Hawser."

"Aye, aye, sir."

"Stand to your guns."

"Aye, aye, your honor."

"Every shot must tell! Aim low—just above the water line."

"Ready now—blaze away!"

This was the best course to pursue, after all, as the precipitate Potiron had put them upon the alert. In less than a minute more, their dwarf battery was unmasked, and Ben Hawser sped his first iron messenger, crashing into the junk's side. They watched eagerly for the result. It struck her just above the water line, and they could see that it was a goodly hole. The Chinese now yelled themselves hoarse in striving to work themselves into something like a fit state for righting their ship. One of the Malays took up the command promptly, and mounting upon a chest, he issued commands right and left, through a speaking trumpet. He appeared to be getting matters ship-shape; so Hypolite Potiron looked after him. He took his aim steadily, and fired. And the Malay, throwing up his arms dropped down from his chest, dead.

"Two!" cried the little Frenchman; "I must have a score, before I shall be happy."

Meanwhile the Chinese had run out their guns and unmasked their portholes. Every gun was fully manned.

"Now!" cried Jefferson to his companions generally, "listen to me. We must not waste a shot—let us pick out our men—do you hear?"

"We do."

"Listen. Waste not a word—not a moment, any more than a shot. This is of the highest importance. I take the furthest gunner. You, Magog, take the next."

"Good."

"You, Pike, the next."

"Good."

"You the next, Nabley."

"I will."

"Monday?"

"Sar."

"Pick out the men bringing the ammunition."

"Yes, sar."

"Now, then, steady—aim slowly, fire, and reload."

"Good!" said the marksmen in the shrouds, with one voice.

Then came a rattling volley! Six of the pirates dropped upon the deck, four writhing in the throes of death, two quite dead. Six men stepped into their places at once. But before they could make another step in the loading of the guns, they were picked off. While they were thus engaged, a red-hot shot had been dropped in the midst of the pirate crew by Ben Hawser. And there occurred a momentary panic amongst the Chinese, which looked as though it was all over with them.

But fast as some were killed, there were others to supply their places, so numerous were these pests of the seas. Meanwhile Sunday had clambered into the top-most part of the rigging, glass in hand, and with a rifle strapped across his back. He saw that the pirates were now making the most desperate efforts to work the ship, while the majority of the crew were fighting. Consequently he rendered signal service by picking off the man who was at the helm. Five minutes had not elapsed since the hot-headed little Potiron had fired his

first unlucky shot, and already the pirates had lost over forty men. It was hot work.

"Look out! They're sending sharpshooters up into the rigging!"

Three of the rifles were turned from the gunners.

"Hold hard!" cried Jefferson, coolly, "don't be rash. Keep to the gunners, or it will soon be all over with us. Let them get well up before we fire."

This was valuable advice to give. Had they left the gunners free to continue the strife, it would have gone hard with the American ship. Sunday let one fellow get on to the cross-trees and settle himself comfortably. Then he loaded rapidly.

"Now, you ugly nigger," said he, "you shall have it, by golly!"

And he dropped a bullet into the fellow's body. It was not a desperate wound, but the shock made him lose his balance. He staggered. Tried to catch at the cross-tree and save himself. In vain. He jerked round and toppled over, sending the man beneath him headlong on to the deck. And so they scattered confusion for a moment amongst their friends, and put themselves out of the fight for good.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE END OF THE FIGHT—A DISASTER.

"A GOOD shot, Sunday," said Jefferson; and as he spoke, he picked off another of the men who were vainly endeavoring to work the guns. Any man amongst the Chinese who showed himself at all prominently was dropped in a twinkling, sometimes with two or more bullets in his wretched carcass. Meanwhile, three red-hot shots had been sent on board the junk, which was burning in two places.

"Steady, lads!" cried Captain Disher.

Sunday was seen gliding down the rigging, hand-over-hand, as fast as he could come. But, alack for the faithful and brave black! just as he was nearing the deck, a ball from the junk struck him in the calf of his right leg. Down he fell howling.

"I see the skunk," said Jefferson, firing a shot as coolly as though he was practising at the butts.

He had seen him, and what is more, he picked him off, thus avenging Sunday before his wound was one minute old. Sunday scrambled up and crawled to Captain Disher's side, while the latter was in earnest consultation with Jack Harkaway the elder about the progress of the fight.

"Do you think it is safe?" the captain was saying as Sunday approached.

"Safe as can be," was Harkaway's reply.

"We have had it all our own way up to the present, for they were taken by surprise," said the captain; "but once let them get one of their big guns into position, and it would be all over with us."

"That's it," returned Harkaway; "but we don't mean to let them. We all know there's danger, but no more than what we run at present, and short of dropping a red-hot shot into their powder magazine, I don't see how—"

"Dat's me," said Sunday, hobbling up, with a groan.

"Hullo, Sunday! Scratched?" said Harkaway.

"Yes, sar; dem dam tiefs shoot dis poor beggar in de calf."

"Go below and get it seen to, then, at once."

"Presently, sar," said Sunday; "jes now I'se busy."

"What?"

"I want to spoke to you pertikler, gemmen. I'se come to tell you, Massa Harkaway, where dey get de powder from."

His hearers started.

"The magazine?"

"Where is it situated?" added the captain.

"Yes, sar."

"Tell us where, my good fellow," said the captain, eagerly; "and then get down below to look after your hurt, for brave men are scarce."

"Help me up, sar, on to de chest, and I'll p'int it out."

They obeyed.

"Now then, Sunday, quick," said Harkaway, very anxiously.

"You see dat gong swiug jes a little way off?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well, gemmen, dey fetches der powder from jes behind dat."

"Do they?"

Harkaway spotted the place through his glass.

"Well?" said Captain Disher.

Harkaway nodded his head.

"Sunday's right."

"Then hang me," cried the captain, "if they'll bring much more powder from there."

He jumped from the chest, and in a few strides was beside Ben Hawser. Now Ben was stripped to the waist, and was working his gun with marvellous ease and rapidity. He was thoroughly enjoying himself.

"Ben," said the captain.

"Your honor."

"We have good news."

"The varmints have struck?" said Ben, excitedly.

"No."

"What then?"

"We have spotted their powder magazine."

Ben gave a regular jump when he heard this.

"Is that a fact, captain?"

"It is."

"Then you just let me know its precise latitude and longitude, and damme, though I say it as shouldn't, Captain Disher, they shan't take much more powder from there."

"Sight for the swinging gong that hangs aft."

"Aye, aye, your honor."

"The magazine is just beyond it."

"Sure?"

"Quite."

"Enough said, your honor."

Ben Hawser chuckled mightily as he sighted his gun for the gong. He did not let his mirth spoil his careful aim, for he felt certain now of putting an end to the battle at a single blow.

"Now for the shot."

The ball, heated to whiteness, was swung into the cannon, and Ben took his long fusee.

"Ready!"

"Look out! Danger ahoy!" shouted those aloft.

"They're lowering boats."

Bang went the gun, and there was a terrific crash on board the pirate. The alarming cry from those aloft had startled Ben Hawser at the critical moment, and he had applied the fusee just a second or so too late. Though the water was comparatively still, care had to be taken to allow to a nicety for the rise and fall of the vessel. The consequence was that instead of landing the magazine, as he had fondly hoped and expected, he shot the gong, it was far from being a bad shot as it happened, but yet not near enough.

"I've played the last tune on their Chinese fiddle," said Ben Hawser, grimly, "but I must land their magazine."

But this was easier said than done. The alarm given from aloft proved to be too well founded. While apparently lost in confusion, the pirates were quietly planning a bold retaliation. The water was suddenly seen to be literally alive with boats, and the peril was serious for our friends.

Captain Disher and Harkaway held a hurried consultation on the matter.

"What is your advice now, Mr. Harkaway?" demanded the skipper.

"This is a puzzler."

"Something must be done, and sharply, too."

"It must."

"We shall have to sheer off."

"Never."

"We must, for the pirates are yet twenty to one of us."

"Drop a shot or two into the boats. Let Ben Hawser try his skill on them."

"Yes, and what of the pirates in the junk?"

"The sharpshooters in the rigging are taking care of them."

"No; it will not do. If we once let their boats swarm around us, we are lost. Once let them be free to work their guns, and good bye to us. The smartness of our fire, and our great activity, have alone kept us safely through the job so far."

He gave orders for working the ship. The change in her tactics was at once perceived, for the pirates in the boats set up the most discordant cries and cheers. Presently Harkaway came with a rush to offer Captain Disher a suggestion.

"What now, Mr. Harkaway?" asked the captain.

"Why not lower some boats to meet them?"

The captain reflected for a moment.

"It would gain time, if it did no further good."

"I think you are right, Mr. Harkaway. I'll have boats lowered. May I leave you in charge while I go aft and get volunteers to man the boats?"

"Good."

The captain called for volunteers for the boats, and a dozen came forward at once to offer their services. Among these volunteers were two lads. These two lads were young Girdwood and Jack Harkaway, junior. Young Jack was full of eagerness to be off before his father or Dick Harvey should see them, for he guessed that they would soon put a stop to his fighting, if they should discover it. The rowers pulled desperately for the nearest of the pirate's boats. Two of the latter had been lowered and manned a few minutes before the others, and now they were considerably in advance of the rest of them. To engage those two boats was the intention of the desperate—not to say foolhardy—young heroes. The pirates, who were not notorious for their bravery, be it remarked, pulled to meet them, simply because they were ignorant of how far in advance they were of their own companions. Otherwise, they would not have ventured two boats against one of their enemy. No. Six to one was their notion of proper fighting odds.

"Pull into this near boat," cried young Jack excitedly.

"Let's bear them down."

"Aye aye!" cried the rowers, as if with one voice.

The Chinese were yelling and shouting, and brandishing long knives, as though they would have made sausage meat of them all. But no sooner did they see the boat nearing them, than they pulled away with desperation.

"The measly skunks!" ejaculated one of the sailors.

"Give 'em a volley."

"No, no," cried Harry Girdwood; "not just yet."

He was not less brave than his young comrade, but he was not quite so impetuous. The battle is not always to the brave. But his commands were not strictly obeyed. One of the pirates, a tall Chinese, in a brown jacket, or rather smock, made himself conspicuous, by standing up, and giving orders with a good deal of noise, and young Jack could not resist the pleasure of having a pop at him with his revolver. The fellow dropped with a howl of pain. The fall of their leader spread dismay and confusion amongst the crew of the boat, and they would have got out of range sharply had they been able to. If. But they were not. This proved to be the signal for a general fight, during which the second boat pulled nearer and nearer, assailing them with vigor.

"Larboard and starboard, we shall get it now!" exclaimed one of the boat's crew.

"Run into this one. Chop them down in a crack, and then we shall be free to bowl over the rest."

It was not quite so easily done as said. They pulled with desperate vigor to the boat in question, but before they had made a dozen boat lengths, their progress was checked. A volley from the pirates disabled one of their rowers. The sailors blazed away at the pirates, but the second boat approached, and now the fight became precious hot. Three of the sailors besides young Girdwood were wounded, and it began to look desperate.

"Close with them, or we shall all be picked off before we can get a slap at them."

A volley from the farther boat now rattled about them. Three of their rifles were immediately turned upon it,

and three of the pirates in that boat dropped. Amidst cries of anguish, and yells of defiance, they pulled on until the two boats dashed against each other. Simultaneously, the crews fell upon each other with desperation. Knives, pistols, creeses, hatchets, cutlasses, were used with such vigor that, in a few seconds, the blood was running like water, and there was not a man or boy present that was not wounded. Then it was that the superiority of the British and Americans showed itself over the Celestials. The vigor of the onslaught was such that the Chinese were knocked all of a heap in the middle of their boat. It would have been an easy victory, comparatively, had not the second boat pulled into them. Then young Jack, who was leaning on his cutlass, trying vainly to staunch an ugly cut in his side, saw their peril.

"Look out, my lads," he shouted; "lower your oars, and pull off, or we shall be caught between two fires."

Several of the men scrambled back to their seats, while the rest pushed off by the Chinese boat, leaving a ghastly proof of their prowess behind them.

"There's a boat coming to support us."

"Where?"

"There, from the ship."

"Hurrah!"

"We'll give 'em pepper yet," cried one of the men.

The two pirates followed them up, while the other boat slowly drew near.

"That's a rum sort of reinforcement to send," cried the coxswain, looking over his shoulder.

"Why rum?" asked the next man.

"Why, there's only two men in the boat."

This was true. One of these men was the cowardly member of the crew, who had been ordered below by Captain Disher at the commencement of the action. The other was Jack Harkaway's evil genius, the ruffian Hunston. How came they together? They were kindred spirits, and a word will presently explain the seeming mystery. Desperate indeed was the position of young Jack's party.

Already overmatched by the foe, who mustered more than thrice their strength, they were falling back, not upon friends, but upon their worst enemies. The boats drew closer again. And now, when they were within pistol shot, Hunston stood up in the boat, and fired point blank at Harry Girdwood. The shot missed. But the object was attained, and this was to show the pirates that they were friends, and fighting upon their—the pirates'—side. In the space of two minutes the three boats closed around the gallant little crew.

"Yield!" cried one of the officers of the pirates, a Malay, who spoke English tolerably well.

Jem Frost, the coxswain of the boat, leaped upon the speaker, and with one desperate stroke, he cut him fairly through the skull, so that his death must have been almost instantaneous. This was the signal for a renewal of the fight. The scramble was so hot, and they were also so closely jammed, that their weapons were half the time idle. They clubbed each other with pistols, and struck out with their fists.

But this could not last long. English, Yankees, and Chinese fell together in the water, and clutched with such fierce desperation that they sank together in each other's arms, and when, from sheer exhaustion, a momentary lull took place in the fearful carnage, but one man was sufficiently unhurt on board the American boat to stand upright. This was Jem Frost. He stood up, bleeding from three flesh wounds in the face, and holding in his hand his trusty cutlass, dripping with the blood of five or six of the enemy, whom he had put out of the way of doing further mischief in this world, and looking so formidable that the enemy scarce dared to tackle him alone.

"Lower your arm, Jem," cried his old messmate, who had turned traitor, "and they'll give you quarter."

"That's a lie!" retorted Jem Frost, "and you know it."

"I swear—"

"Hold your jaw. I don't want no palaver with a deserter. You're one of the enemy. Look to yourself, for damme, here's for you."

Saying which the gallant fellow, in sheer desperation, sprang at him and cut him down. Then, swinging round his fearful weapon, he shouted:

"Come on, you infernal pirates, and try the strength of a true sailor."

And he did damage right and left, until his sword arm was broken by a pistol shot; and as his weapon dropped, by his side, the pirates fell upon him and bore him down, and they stabbed and jobbed and cut at the brave fellow, until his body was hacked into a score of bits, and thrown to the ravenous sharks who followed the scent of blood.

"Throw the prisoners into the water to the sharks," ejaculated the chief officer of the pirates, "and let us see them eaten."

It would have been done, too, had not Hunston interfered.

"I want to save two of them," he said.

"Who are you that gives orders? We can save none." And so saying, the ruffian pirate waved his hand as a signal to his men. The poor wounded sailors were hurled over, and fell a speedy prey to the ravenous sharks, who played about the boats, reddening the water at each fresh step in this horrible feast. Two of the pirates dragged up young Jack and was nearly insensible from fatigue and loss of blood, and were about to hurl him overboard. At this critical moment Hunston showed both presence of mind and determination. Whipping out his revolver, he presented it full at the officer who had given the command.

"Stay your hand. If they throw the boy in, you shall die and follow him."

"What do you mean? Silence, or you shall share his fate."

"Put the boy down."

The two men looked at their officer for confirmation of this order. The officer felt unhappy in his mind, for Hunston's pistol was near his head, and so he signified by a word of assent that they could obey the obstinate and one-armed savage.

"You shall pay for this with your life."

"I'm quite ready," answered Hunston, "to your captain, when we get on board. In the meantime, I shall see those two boys taken to the ship alive. They are not to die yet, and not as quickly as that. When their time does come, you shall be satisfied."

And that is how young Jack Harkaway and Harry Girdwood came to be preserved by their enemy Hunston.

CHAPTER XLII.

WHERE IS YOUNG JACK?

DOUBTLESS the reader is wondering how Hunston, a prisoner on board the American ship, contrived to escape, and in company with the traitor who had refused to fight against the Chinese pirates; and who had been sent below by Captain Disher in disgrace. It was the simplest matter in the world. When the man had gone below, he had come in contact with Hunston, and soon his dissatisfaction had been perceived by the prisoner. Now, Hunston was not slow to profit by such a circumstance as this, and soon there sprang up between these two false men a mutual understanding. It is needless to enter into particulars now; suffice it to say that they made a guilty compact together. The traitor sailor got a boat during the confusion which prevailed on board, and profiting by the state of affairs, he and Hunston contrived to get clear off the ship.

Captain Disher watched in breathless interest the conflict of the boats. But when he saw the brave people beaten down—hurled into the water one after another—he turned away in a very troubled state of mind. But all this time Harkaway had no idea that his boy—young Jack—and Harry Girdwood—were in one of the boats, and consequently among the slain or prisoners. Poor Harkaway! He little dreamed that the life of his boy hung on a thread during that critical period.

"They are all done for," said Harkaway, turning to the captain.

"I fear so," said the captain, after a pause; "but look again, Mr. Harkaway. Have they thrown all the prisoners overboard?"

"All—stay, they appear to be taking one or two on board."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"Can you distinguish who they are?"

"No; yet stay, they look to me just like two boys."

"Boys?"

"Yes."

"How came boys to be on such a service? I sent no boys."

"Why, there's one just gone up," continued Harkaway, peering through his glass, "that looks about the age of my Jack. You—surely you never accepted his service?"

"I—I—I—really don't know; there were so many," replied the captain, "asking to engage with the pirates. But I trust your brave boy is not with them."

"Sir, if my boy has been permitted to make one of the fighting crews in those boats, you shall account to me for his death."

"Shall?"

"Yes—shall."

"Mr. Harkaway!" cried Captain Disher, "you forget yourself."

"If" continued Harkaway, not heeding the interruption, "if it be shown that you have aided my rash boy to destroy himself, you shall account to me for it, sir—to me, with your life."

Captain Disher bowed.

"I am always at your service, Mr. Harkaway," he replied, coldly, "when and where you please; once my duties ended on board this ship, you may depend I shall be ready to meet you."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE FRUITS OF GLORY.

CAPTAIN DISHER and Harkaway did not exchange a word for some time, but the captain made inquiries, and found to his regret that both young Jack and Harry Girdwood were of the party the boats. When they had dropped out of rifle range of the pirates, Magog Brand and Mr. Jefferson came down from their perches in the rigging.

"Captain Disher," said the latter, "we have paid heavily for our triumph."

The captain's countenance fell at this.

"Poor boy," murmured Jefferson. "Brave young Jack! Who will break the news to his mother? I wouldn't face her, for one."

The skipper winced. If these were the sentiments of Mr. Jefferson, who was in no way responsible for young Jack's loss, how must he—the captain—have felt?

"Captain."

"Well, Ben?"

"Heard the latest news, your honor, from below?"

"Below!"

"Aye, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, he's escaped."

The captain stared.

"Who's escaped?"

"The prisoner—that there one fanned skunk."

"Hunston?"

"The same."

"How the dickens could he have got away?"

"In a boat. While we was fighting the ship, he got a boat somehow."

"But he had no assistance at hand."

"That's where you're wrong, sir," replied Ben Harkaway. "He had that confounded warmin' you sent below 'cause he got the bellyache about having to fight a bit."

"You don't mean—"

"That's what I do mean, captain," returned Ben gravely; "and what's more, one of our men see 'em, in their boat, cut off our men's retreat in the cutter."

"Indeed!" ejaculated the captain, with an oath. "I hope I may live to see the villain swinging at our yard-arm."

Ben shook his head.

"You'll never do that, Captain Disher," he answered, gravely.

"Won't I, by—"

"No."

"I will."

"Scuse me captain, you never will for he's already ate up by the sharks. Brave Jem Frost cut him down, and then got finished himself. But he gave 'em something all round, it seems, before they could settle him."

"Brave fellow!"

"He was that, sir. It seems he played the devil with 'em. He peppered 'em right and left, raked 'em fore and aft, as one might say, in a manner of speaking."

"Blow me, Captain Disher continued Ben, "it gives me a tingling in the snout as if my blessed peepers was a-going to begin pumping."

"Dammé, sir, they're hanging out signals of distress already for my old pal, Jem Frost."

Need we say that Mrs. Harkaway was heartbroken when she became aware of her loss? The shocking mishap, which closed their otherwise triumphant brush with the pirate, cast a gloom over the whole ship's company and passengers for the rest of the voyage. Poor Emily! It seriously affected her health. Do what they would, she could not be roused from the deep melancholy which settled upon her.

Jack and their many friends vainly tried to comfort her. Mr. Jefferson exerted all his reasoning powers, and exerted them in vain.

"You must not make yourself so wretched over this, Mrs. Harkaway," he repeated continually. "You see that our Jack has a special knack of his own of getting out of the most difficult scrapes."

She shook her head and sighed in reply.

"This is more difficult than all, Mr. Jefferson," she would say. "I dare not even hope that my poor boy lives."

"I'll bet my life, ma'am, that he does."

"It is not likely."

"Why not?"

"You think as you wish. I would that I could too."

"My dear lady," the giant Kentuckian would reply, "I don't simply think, I know, positively know—it is a species of instinct with me, that is precisely the same as positive knowledge—your boy lives, and will be restored to you. Of that you may be as sure as that we two are at present here talking together."

"I wish I could think so," was all the answer that the bereaved mother could make.

CHAPTER XLIII.

BELLICOSE MOLE.

SOME days after, our old friend Mole, ventured on deck, and met the little Frenchman.

"My name is Isaac Mole, sir, at your service."

"And I am called Hypolite Potiron, monsieur, your tres humble serviteur."

And they exchanged bows. The Frenchman was as full of motion as the dancing barber. Mr. Mole bowed with the grace of a Chesterfield, in spite of a certain stiffness caused by the rigidity of his wooden member.

"We can congratulate ourselves, sir, upon having given those wretches a wholesome lesson," said Mr. Mole.

Happy Mole. He was under the impression, as he spoke, that he materially contributed to their success. Already he forgot the painful sensations he had experienced during the action, and how he had sought comfort and consolation under the bedclothes with Mrs. Mole in their berth. He humbugged himself no less than his hearer. And that was saying something.

"I haven't given those rascals such a lesson, monsieur,"

"not for years."

"Truly, sir."

"A fact, sir."

"Have you evers had the disagreeable honor of fighting ze pirate before, sare?"

"Fighting!" echoed Mr. Mole, with a withering look at the Frenchman. "I see you do not know me so well as the war offices of all nations do."

And then he was buried in silent reflection for several minutes, as if mentally fighting his battles o'er again.

"Fighting, monsieur!" he went on; "why, the action in which I commanded was, perhaps, the hottest on record."

"Indeed, sare!"

"A fact, sir."

"The pirates must have been nombreux—numbrous, what you call—dat is frequent."

"Numerous, you mean, Monsieur Potiron," suggested the tutor.

"Ah, yes."

"Well, of course."

"Great odds, as you say."

"Forty to one," returned Mr. Mole, unblushingly.

"Morbieu!"

"Yes, sir; and I fought eighteen of them single-handed, and, in fact, I may mention that I was more embarrassed by the bodies of the slain which I piled up around me than by all else. Two hours and a quarter of mortal strife went on, and I smote them hip and thigh."

"On the hip and on the thigh? How could you, sare, always strike in ze same places?"

Mr. Mole replied by a supercilious smile.

"A figure of speech," my friend," he said; they fell before my arm like ripe corn before a sickle. One of them shot me through the breast. I had two saber cuts on the head, and I lost this leg in that fight."

"Vat a great man!" cried the little Frenchman, in profound admiration.

"You flatter me," said the diffident Mole.

"You must be a very great personage in England," said Monsieur Potiron.

Mr. Mole smiled complacently.

"Well, yes, history will record my deeds."

"Mais si—yes; a great capitaine."

"Well," said Mr. Mole, "I must confess that my little feats were much talked about in England."

"Your little feats? You mean, sare, ze one you have lose?"

Mr. Mole looked puzzled at this. He could not fathom M. Potiron's meaning for awhile. But presently it dawned upon him.

"I see your mistake, monsieur," he said; "I don't mean feet—not f-double-e-t, but feat—f-e-a-t—a deed of daring in this instance."

"Oh-h-h, I see!" exclaimed the Frenchman.

"Yes," pursued Mr. Mole; "I was known for a long time as Mole, the Bold Buccaneer."

"Truly?"

"Yes."

"Mole ze Boucanier?"

"Mole the Bold Buccaneer," continued the tutor calmly; "by others I was known as Mole the Avenger—some called me Mole the Pirates' Terror."

Monsieur Potiron stepped back to take a long look of deep admiration at the disinterested Mole, who was so condescending as to relate his own glories for his (Potiron's) special edification. There was no mistaking the wild, extravagant admiration which the little Frenchman had for Isaac Mole from that moment. Continentals are more given to gesticulating than we islanders, and Monsieur Potiron expressed as much with a shrug and a grimace as Mr. Mole could have done in a long speech.

"I know now, sare," said he, after a moment's reflection.

"Know what?" demanded Mr. Mole.

"Why ze pirate have done so little when we engage him."

"Do you? Why?"

"Dey have hear that you were on board."

"Likely enough," returned the tutor.

"It is sure."

"It would not surprise me," said Mr. Mole, "for it has been my lot to see a villainous pirate once strike his colors without so much as firing a shot when I summoned him to surrender."

"Nevare."

"Fact, sir."

"And what did you do to them, vid de pirates?"

"Hung 'em up to our yardarm; seven of a row, sir, as I'm a sinner."

"Extraordinaire!" exclaimed Mr. Potiron.

"So you'd have said if you had only seen our crew. Why, sir, they were twenty to one, and carried forty guns, while we hadn't so much as a howitzer."

"What is he, howitzer, Monsieur Mole?"

"A small gun, a little cannon. The pirate chief was a desperate fellow, over six feet high, and big in proportion. He did all he could to make his men fight, but they were demoralized."

"By your great name?"

"Yes."

"Oh!"

"Well, sir, he seemed to think himself hardly done by, so I thought I would give him a chance."

"It was too generous of you, sare."

"Perhaps, but then I always respect courage."

"I could not hang him in cold blood with the rest, so I challenged him to single combat."

"Cre nom d'une pipe!" ejaculated Monsieur Potiron; "vat a hero it is—and you did fight?"

"Yes, he was a tough customer."

"He chose to fight with swords, cutlasses"

"We fought for an hour and a half."

"I ran him through the body five times," said Mole, flourishing his umbrella, "but he would not give in, so I was forced to chop him to bits literally."

"A most remarkable man."

"He saluted me as he fell, covered with wounds, and his last words were a compliment to me—an undeserved compliment, I may say."

"No, no."

"Indeed it was."

"And vat said ze pirate to ze brave Monsieur Mole?"

Mr. Mole coughed, and after a moment's reflection, said:

"The last words of the pirate chief were: 'Honor to the brave Mole.'"

"Allow me ze distinguished honor, Monsieur Mole," said the Frenchman, with a most elaborate bow, "to take your hand. It is a privilege most distingue. I felicitate the greatest warrior the world has seen since my father was in the world."

"Your father!"

"Yes."

"Was he a great soldier?"

"What, sare! Is it possible dat you do not know my father?"

"I regret to say I did not."

"He was the great rival of Bonaparte."

"Dear, dear!" exclaimed Mr. Mole, "that carries us back a very long way."

"Certes—assuredly. My father won his fame by his bravery, Monsieur Mole. Not by scheming as de oder did. Dey was at ze bataille of Morengo togezer. Ze bataille was lose."

"Lost."

"Lost. Oni—lost but for my fader—father I mean. At the head of ten men he stood the charge of a whole wing of the enemy's army—five thousand!"

Mr. Mole opened his eyes at this. When not lying himself, he was keenly alive to the ridicule of wild exaggeration in others.

"Ten men!"

"Ten, sare."

"Your father was a corporal, then, I suppose."

"No, sare; he was a general and marechal of France."

"And a general commanding ten men!" repeated Mr.

Mole, in some disgust. "Come, I say, monsieur, don't you think you are mistaken about the general details?"

"No, sare."

"You must be."

Monsieur Potiron looked as fierce as a maggot.

"I don't mistake, sare, and I can prove it at the point of ze sword to anybody."

Mr. Mole coughed. He had not expected quite so fierce a retort.

"I wonder," thought he to himself, "if he really means it, or if he is only trying to bounce me."

He thought he would test it. So he put on a swagger.

"I know much about the point of the sword, Monsieur Potiron," he said, "and I am acquainted with pistols."

"Ah!"

"I can snuff a candle at eighteen paces."

"Oh!"

"I can toss up a glove and cut out the thumb before it reaches the ground."

"Never!"

"A fact, sir," answered Mr. Mole, modestly.

"Or I can spot every pip on the nine of hearts, every shot."

"Dat is vat I call ver' good shooting, sare."

"Well, it isn't to say bad."

"No, parbleu! you must be a man to fear."

"No—not to fear," said Mr. Mole. "I manage to inspire respect by keeping myself in good practice, that's all; ever since I winged those three men in the trenches."

"Three!"

"Yes!"

"Vat—all together?"

"Yes, it was all at the same affair; in point of fact, I potted them all three, as near as a toucher, simultaneously, and this is how it was done."

"We fought with revolvers; I pinked one off, and before they could say Jack Robinson turned my weapon and gave the other two the contents of a chamber each."

"Wonderful!"

"Not wonderful," said Mr. Mole; "the fact is shooting became a science with me."

"Evidemment," said Potiron, "evidently."

"You have never seen my feat of shooting straight up in the air and cutting the bullet with another before it can reach the earth."

Monsieur Potiron gasped again at this.

"You don't mean that I must believe dat?"

"It is a fact, sir."

"Sare," said Monsieur Potiron, looking indignant, "you laugh at me."

"I would not be so rude," replied Mr. Mole, "though I don't wonder at your supposing you were being laughed at."

"Why, sir?"

"You must be used to getting laughed at."

"Morbien!" ejaculated Potiron, ferociously, "you shall answer for dat."

"With pleasure," returned Mr. Mole, cheerfully. "Shall I fetch my pistols?"

"No, zare, ze sword is ze only arm dat a gentleman can fight with."

"Pistols."

"I insist upon ze sword."

"Very good," said Mr. Mole, complacently. "You shall have a sword, and I'll bring up my pair of revolvers. D'ye see?"

"No, sare."

"Oh, yes, you shall quarte and tierce, and thrust away till you are sick, and I'll pepper you."

"Peppare me! 'Cre, nom d'un chien! Peppare me?"

"Yes, monsieur," said Mole, throwing himself into an attitude calculated to inspire the other with awe. "And damme, sir, you will not be the first one I have peppered. So take a Christian man's counsel and go and make your will."

"What?"

"Your will."

"Vill! Vat is vill?"

"Your last dying words."

"Oh!"

The notion appeared to make Monsieur Potiron just a little uncomfortable. Mr. Mole perceived his advantage. He swaggered, and looked as terrible as Pistol himself on the field of Agincourt.

"I don't care to make two or three bites at a cherry," said Mole, with his regular military cough. "I shall very soon put you out of your trouble for this wicked world."

The Frenchman could not brag as loud as Mole, and so he had to lower his colors. He muttered something about meaning no offence, and being sure that the brave Mole was as skilful at the pistol gallery as he averred.

"Only, sare, I wish to express my admiration of you, voila tout. I could not find words to make you comprehend how very much I admire—"

Mr. Mole interrupted him with a patronising wave of the hand and a smile.

"That is enough," monsieur," he said, superciliously; "only I never allow anybody to call my courage in question, for, sir, I am ready to fight any man that does so."

"Of course."

"And my pistols are still at your service if—if you doubt either my narrative or my courage."

"Mr. Mole."

"Hullo!"

Mr. Mole and the Frenchman jumped back, startled half out of their lives. Just behind them was a large sea chest, and from the rear of this two figures suddenly rose up. They were Pike and Nabley, the English detectives. They had been sitting there to rest themselves and compare notes when Mole and Mr. Potiron came up.

"Mr. Mole."

"Mr. Pike! Goodness gracious, how you startled me!"

"Indeed?"

"Yes, I did not know there was anybody there."

"I want a word with you, if you please."

"With pleasure, Mr. Pike. What is it, pray?"

"In private, if possible, Mr. Mole."

"Dear me, yes."

So he stepped aside with the detective.

"It is a very unpleasant matter I have come upon, sir," began the detective, with hesitation.

"Nothing wrong, I hope, Mr. Pike?" said Mr. Mole.

Pike was silent. Mr. Mole appealed to Nabley. But the latter was evidently loth to break the unpleasant intelligence, what ever it was; for he turned aside as well, and his glance fell to the ground, while he heaved a faint sigh of commiseration.

"The fact is, sir," said Nabley, "I wouldn't for one have broached this subject if I hadn't happened to overhear a word or two that fell from you just now."

"Ahem!" said Mr. Mole, a bit uneasily.

"Nor would I for another, Mr. Mole."

"Will you speak out?" cried Mr. Mole, goaded on now to fierceness.

"Well, then, sir—then—there, Nabley, you tell it; I haven't the heart to."

"The fact is, Mr. mole," said Nabley, "my friend has come on a very awkward mission. He comes with a message of defiance."

"What?"

"A message of defiance," repeated Nabley.

"A challenge?"

"Yes."

"Goodness me!"

"I thought you would say so," exclaimed Pike.

"Who from?"

"From a fierce American gentleman who thinks himself affronted, and whom nothing can pacify."

"Surely not Mr. Jefferson?" said Mole.

Nabley shook his head.

"No; the gentleman we mean has been confined to his room with a bad cold, but he has now recovered, and feels himself strong enough to fight any three men on board."

"His name, his name!" gasped Mole.

"Well," said Nabley, "his fighting name is Brick."

"Oh!" gasped Mr. Mole, staggering back. "Brick again! Why was a Brick born?"

"You know him?"

"I should think I do."

"Why, he told me he had never seen you, but that you had grossly insulted him."

"I didn't."

"He says you did. Well, it appears that he followed you on board solely for the sake of fighting you and having your life."

"The ruffian!"

"Well, if he doesn't meet you soon in mortal combat, he says he'll shoot you down anywhere he can see you."

"Why, that would be murder."

"Of course; but he says he has murdered six men, and you will make the seventh—and he likes odd numbers."

"You will not allow him?"

"To murder you? No."

"Quite right," said Mr. Mole; "you are sensible men, both of you, and—"

"And this," said Pike, "is how I propose to obviate all danger of murder."

"Ah," said Mr. Mole, eagerly. "let me hear your plan, dear friend."

"You shall fight him."

"What?" shouted poor Mole.

"Wait a bit, we shall choose pistols. We are the aggrieved party, and the choice is with us; we choose pistols."

"Pistols!"

"Yes, revolvers."

"Why?"

"Can you ask?"

"Can I? Of course; damme, sir, I do," cried Mr. Mole, working himself up into a perfect fever.

"The reason is that you shall get first fire, and wing him. You break his sword arm, you understand?"

Mr. Mole felt as though all his inner machinery had dropped down a foot.

"That will suit you to a turn," said Pike; "he, sir?"

"But I might not have a steady hand, and miss."

"Not likely."

"No, it is not; but I might miss my aim and wound him badly."

"So much the worse for him."

Mole winced.

"Ahem, yes."

"Now, supposing," said Pike, "that the Frenchman acts for you? I'll tell him."

"No, no," ejaculated Mr. Mole, hurriedly; "not him. See this dreadful Brick for me, Mr. Pike, and say I should prefer our duel to come off when we lane."

"He wouldn't believe me, and—hullo! why, here comes Mr. Brick with pistols and swords. My gracious, Mr. Mole, there'll be murder done."

The tutor shot along the deck like a deer, stumped away to his berth, and was seen no more.

Within four and twenty hours more they disembarked, and the whole party started shortly for Mr. Mole's plantation. No one could have recognized Mr. Mole; he had so disguised himself to avoid the dreaded Brick. And now they were fairly landed in China. But alas, without young Jack. Where was he? It had doubtless gone hard with him this time, for he was in the hands of cruel pirates. His friends and family secretly mourned him as dead, although they did not admit to each other their fatal convictions.

[To be continued in No. 1237.]

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